

# RAZORBLADES AND ASPIRIN

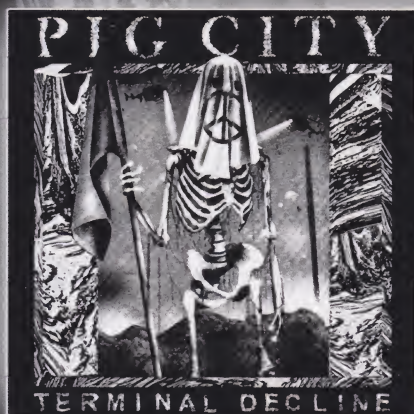
A Hardcore Punk Fanzine • Issue No. 8 • Winter 2020





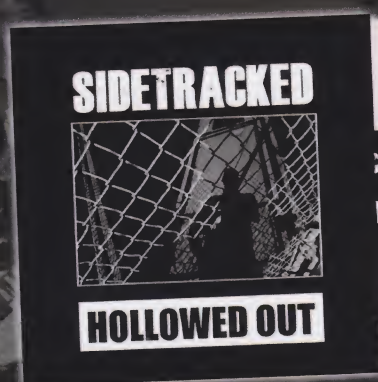
# PIG CITY

## TERMINAL DECLINE



BLACKENED CRUST HARDCORE ALA HHIG AND ARTIMUS PYLE

## SIDETRACKED HOLLOWED OUT



ABRUPTLY FAST HARDCORE IN THE VEIN OF INFEST & NO COMMENT

ALSO AVAILABLE

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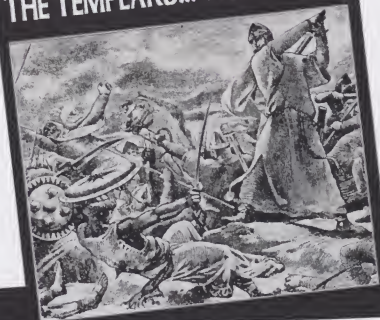
# Poison Idea

PIG'S LAST STAND - GATEFOLD 2xLP

## TEMPLARS

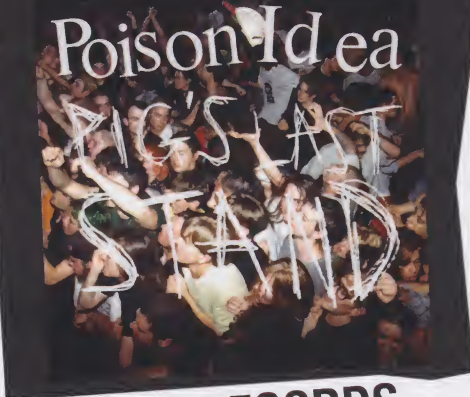
1118-1312 12" EP

THE TEMPLARS... 1118 - 1312



## Poison Idea

### PIG'S LAST STAND



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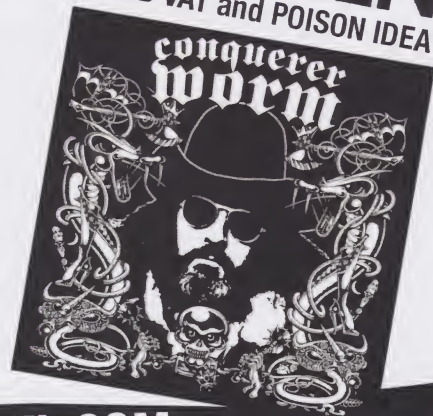
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# POWER ALONE

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SPEAK OF THE DEVIL  
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

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# AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

And I'm not joking! After years of *Razorblades & Aspirin* being purely a conduit for my own photography, I've decided to turn it into an actual fanzine. I mean, it was always a fanzine but rather than just being a series of images hoping to convey the feeling of the live experience of punk, I've decided to throw in some writing—well, a lot writing.

Inside this issue you will find interviews with photographers I admire, musicians whose work has influenced me, artists I extol, and my own opinions about roughly 180 recent releases.

So what happens next?

Well another zine, of course. Then another. Then another.

Will everything I release look like this?

No. That said, the current plan is to do something like this quarterly, with interviews, record reviews, photographs, etc. come April, then July, then October, then January, and so on.

But that's not all—I'm going to continue to release zines focused purely on photography, branching out & releasing other people's work as well as my own.

Sound good?

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# CHRISTINA CARLSEN

Inferno Photography

Copenhagen, Denmark

## How did you get into punk?

I grew up in a small village in the countryside. Always felt a lot like a loner and never had many friends as a kid. Not until I met another loner at the local riding school, where I was taking lessons (oh yeah, was always into horses!). She was only a couple of years older than me, and had amazing parents that also loved music, a really cool basement of her own and a stereo, records and music was always playing in their home. Our friendship was very centered around listening to new bands and watching Headbangers Ball with Vanessa Warwick. She used to make me all kinds of amazing mixtapes and I got into everything from Sepultura, Life of Agony, Nailbomb, Nirvana, Rage Against the Machine, Bad Religion, Green Day, Suicidal Tendencies etc. All the bands that rocked the music world around 1994! Especially RATM, Green Day and Bad Religion ended up having great influence in what I started to look up myself. I loved that these were "outsider" bands with a clear message (maybe not so obvious with Green Day) presented with passion and anger. I started my own zine, *Diarrhea Magazine* (was mad into The Vandals) and started attending gigs, eventually ending up in Ungdoms-huset after a concert with The Dwarves and Scum Element at a different venue in the city. Ungdoms-huset was like the land at the end of the rainbow for me, and I never left. Still remember the feeling of just feeling completely at home (combined with the feeling of true fear, haha). DIY punk has been in my life ever since!

## How did you get into photography?

I was always fascinated by the idea of capturing

the passion and intensity that I felt at gigs, and very early on started taking pictures with my mom's shitty analog pocket camera. When I was done with primary school, I did a few "youth courses" with graphic design and arts and did 6 months at a photography school where I learned to develop film. I met a lot of inspiring people there, who encouraged me to continue exploring.

## Do you shoot film, digital or a mix? Do you have a preference and why?

I would love to do analog photography, but I don't have access to a studio and it's mad expensive to rent your way into one. I tell myself that I would prefer analog, because it's what I prefer in other people's work and I love the process and the feeling of it – but maybe I also have to admit to myself, that I am too lazy to do it myself. It's a very time-consuming process. But that's also what makes it beautiful and unique. With digital photography, even shitty photographers can make good looking pictures with the right Photoshop actions or Instagram filters, haha!

So I guess you can say that I prefer analog.

## Why do you shoot shows? Do you make photos beyond shows?

As I said, I was always fascinated by the idea of capturing the raw intensity of a good show. Somehow striving to capture the moment and making the viewer able to "be there" and enjoy it as well. Something you, btw is super good at doing! I am not a technically good photographer, so I still need to work on that. I do shoot a lot of photos outside of shows. Mostly in nature, landscapes and details. Me

and my partner love to go hiking and I always bring my camera and try to capture the beautiful surroundings and small details in nature. Macro shots of plants, textures, patterns etc. fascinate me and keeps me curious about my surroundings. My future ambition is to start making more portraits, getting closer to the people I come across in the scene outside of shows, worldwide.

## What is your edit process like? Do you prefer your final images to be in black & white or color or a mix and why? If a mix, how do you decide if an image should be in one or the other?

I mostly work in black and white, and when I work in colors, they are usually heavily desaturated. I like the drama that it creates, and I love to play with the details. I edit my photos quite a bit, because I enjoy that part of the process. For me, it's more about trying to capture the feeling of being present, by visually enhancing the intensity, rather than showing how it actually looked like. Guess I wouldn't be cut out for the press photo industry! I don't retouch though. That would be cheating, haha.

It does happen, that an image just has amazing colors and I prefer to work with that. But it's the exception.

When I shoot outside of shows, it's usually in color. But in nature, the drama is often in the colors, so I guess that's why.

## Which image of yours is your favorite and why? What makes it a successful image?

Ouch, that's really hard. My favorite image will











change, depending on the day you ask me! I am actually not such a big fan of my own work, so it's hard to say. I think I want to mention two images, breaking the rules. I love to get "lucky", and one particular time where I felt I got "lucky" was shooting a show in Tokyo with Crucial Section in 2011. The bassplayer, Morita, is such a crazy guy on stage (well, they all are!) and as he swings the bass over his head, his eye catches mine and I just love that! When you first see the image, most people don't notice because it's a bit blurry, but what I like about it, is that when you start investigating it, it grown into a better image. This image does not work in black and white. It's not actually a great picture, but I just appreciate what it contains. Stories are important too.

The second one is two band portraits taken on the back stairs of Ungdomshuset at K-Town Hardcore Fest, immediately after MURO finished their killer set in 2018. They went through so much on the two first tours in Europe. I think they had some of the best experiences in their lives here. And meeting them here, sparked the beginning of a friendship that later brought us to Colombia (I joined Junta on their tour there in February 2019). The collective they have, is super inspiring.

The first one is taken only of them. On the second shot, I asked that their driver Marta would join them. She was almost as big a part of the band as the members on that tour, and it really shows. That image captured what that tour was about, and it makes me smile every time I look at it. I have a lot of post-show images from that staircase!

**What photographers do you admire the most (not just music photographers)? What is it about their work that appeals to you?**

I deeply admire a Danish photographer called Jacob Ave Sobol. His work is so intensely dramatic and capturing. I can look at his work forever and find details and stories within it, without ever getting bored. A Swedish photographer called Kajsa Gullberg is also a long time favorite of mine. None of them work with music but explore the darker side of life and all its flaws. Their ability to make any fragile and wounded existence beautiful and capturing, is inspiring. The imperfections of life have always fascinated me.

It's such an obvious mention that it's almost silly, but I very much admire the photography of Martin Sorrondeguy. I love the way he manages to capture not just the bands, but also the people, the scene, the atmosphere and creates a complete picture of a diverse and complex environment! Looking through his work, portraying people in all stages of their lives, makes me believe in what we are doing in the DIY scene and gives me hope that I never get tired or "grow out" of punk! I wish I was confident enough to do more portraits of the punks in the scene.

**Have you had your work published (self or by others)? A photo show? What would be your top three goals with your work?**

I have done three zines with my pictures and a few of my live shots and band photos have been used on record sleeves and inserts. Will Kinser and I did a

photo exhibition at K-Town Hardcore Fest a couple of years ago, and this year, a handful of my pictures again ended up on the wall at the fest. At the moment, I am working on a book project with a collective of womxn, non-binary & trans people documenting the punk and DIY scene. It's a super cool project that will end up as a few exhibitions and a book.

Hmm, the top goals of my work? That's a really tough question, because I am not sure I am that ambitious, haha! I would love to make my own book at some point, but I am unsure if anyone would be interested in buying it, so I am still a little reluctant. I make a living as a graphic designer at an offset printing house, so it would be the obvious thing to do for me. I did all the zines myself as well and had them printed at my job. I developed a special method, with my colleague, to make the prints extra black and full of contrast, without ruining the details. My own special sauce recipe, haha!

Goal number two would be to publish a book in tri-tone colors. It's mad expensive but looks soooo good!

Goal number three ... I am extremely humbled when people ask to use my work. I hope it will happen more often in the future!

UNA BESTIA INCONTROLABLE













# CARLOS GARCIA

Oakland, CA

## How did you get into punk?

Everything really started when I was 12-13 and I started to hangout with these people who lived in an alley one block from the house I grew up, they all used to blast punk and some metal all the time and by that time I was bored of the people that surrounded me around school, I never really fit in that environment or even felt welcome which was totally the opposite feeling with the lyrics I was listening to, mainly bands like La Polla Records, Eskorbuto, Sin Dios, Massacre 68 were the bands I started to look up to and then everything changed to me and now I cant even imagine my life with no punk.

## How did you get into photography?

I have a really bad memory so photography is a really easy way to keep my memories alive

## Do you shoot film, digital or a mix? Do you have a preference and why?

Film was hard and expensive to find in my hometown so the option was digital, nowadays I do both but still doing more digital, its hard talking about a preference I love the quality and the process of film but I am a anxious and busy person so I dont really have time to go thru all this process, digital way you can get your photos right away but is not going to

be the same raw quality ever.

## Why do you shoot shows? Do you make photos beyond shows?

Two of the many ways to express punk are always being musical and visual so I decided to be part of this artistic way to document punk thru the years.

I have a film project which is more about the develop of the new world on what people call "progress"

## What do you look for when you are taking photographs? What are you trying to convey?

Time, its all about time, I try to document an age

## What is your edit process like? Do you prefer your final images to be in black & white or color or a mix and why? If a mix, how do you decide if an image should be in one or the other?

I used to take only photos of color but I changed to B&W in the last couple of years, its really rare when I release a color photograph

## Which image of yours is your favorite and why? What makes it a successful image?

I don't think I have a personal favorite, I think the

most successful images are the ones that bring people the best memories and I have thousand of those so its impossible to me to choose only one.

## What photographers do you admire the most (not just music photographers)? What is it about their work that appeals to you?

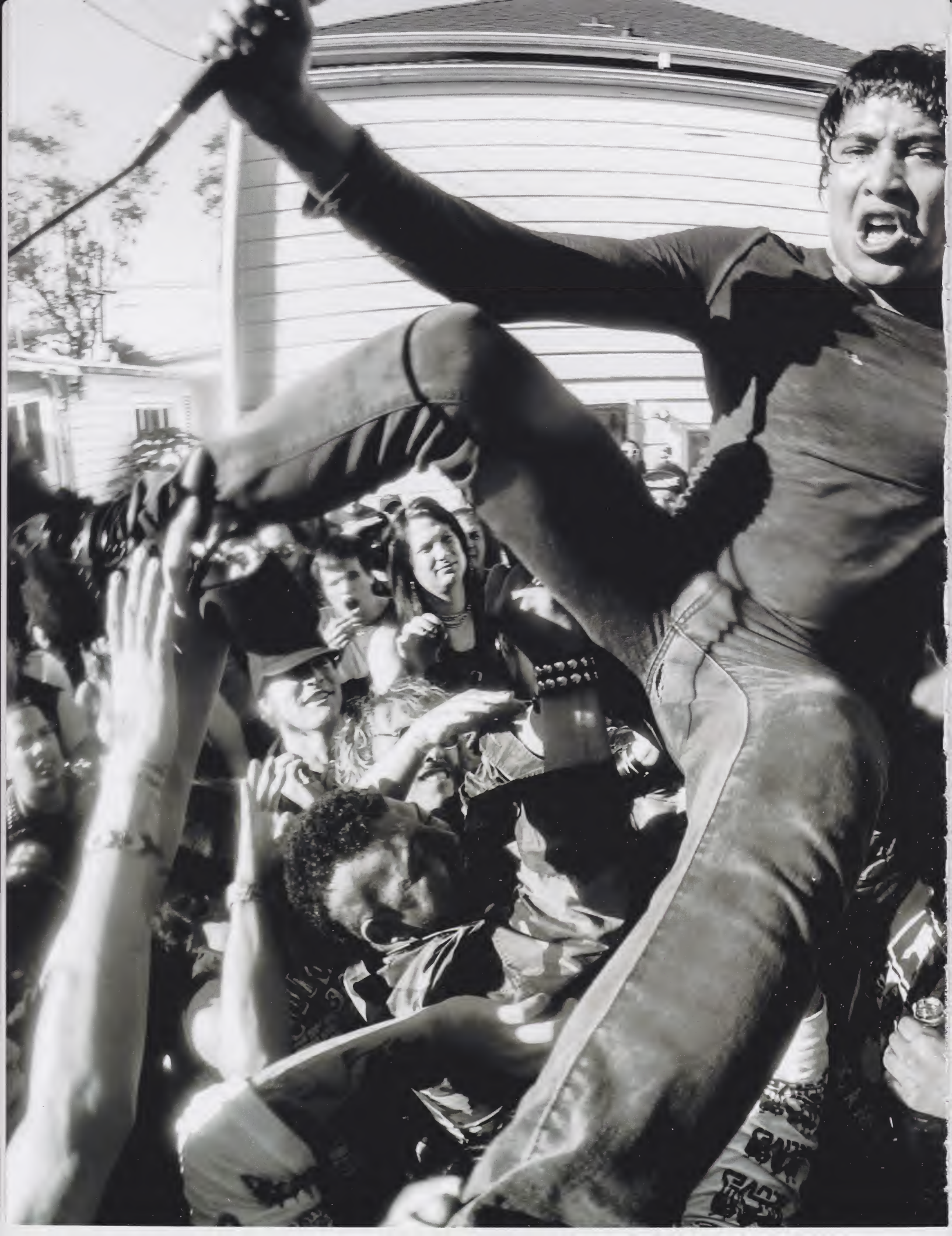
Skateboarding always been an influence to my lifestyle and during the time I started to skate I found out about Grant Brittain, Craig Stecyk, Glen E. Friedman and I was amazed by what they captured it made me feel with so much energy and excitement, and now as a photographer I respect what they did during their time.

## Have you had your work published (self or by others)? A photo show? What would be your top three goals with your work?

I had participated in some photo exhibitions, took photos on different festivals and shows around the world but my main goal is to make a photo book one day, I always wanted to make some photo zines but the idea of having a book of at least 10 years of punk flirts more with me.

If you care about your camera more than I do never carry it on a plastic bag and leave it on the floor when you get drunk.

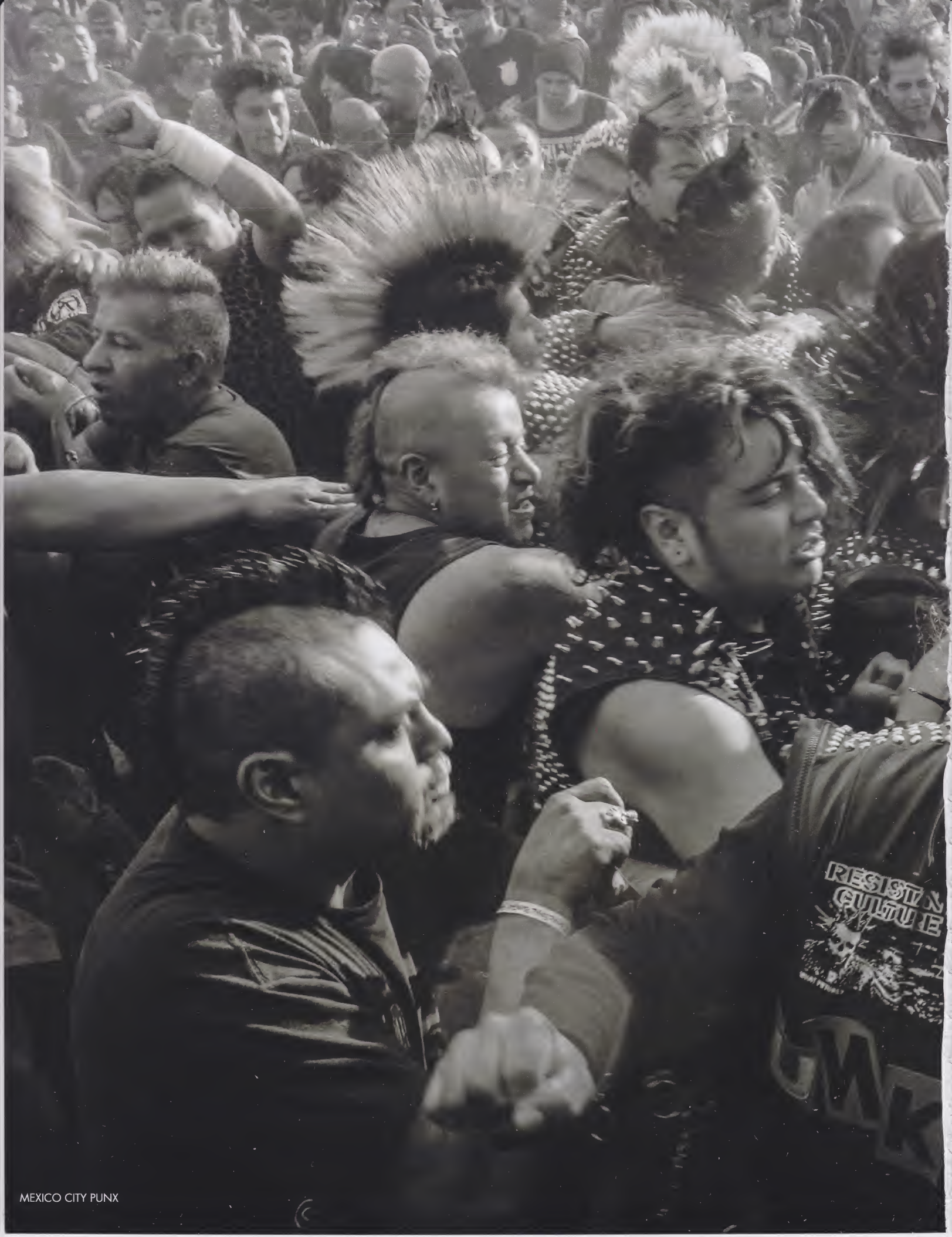




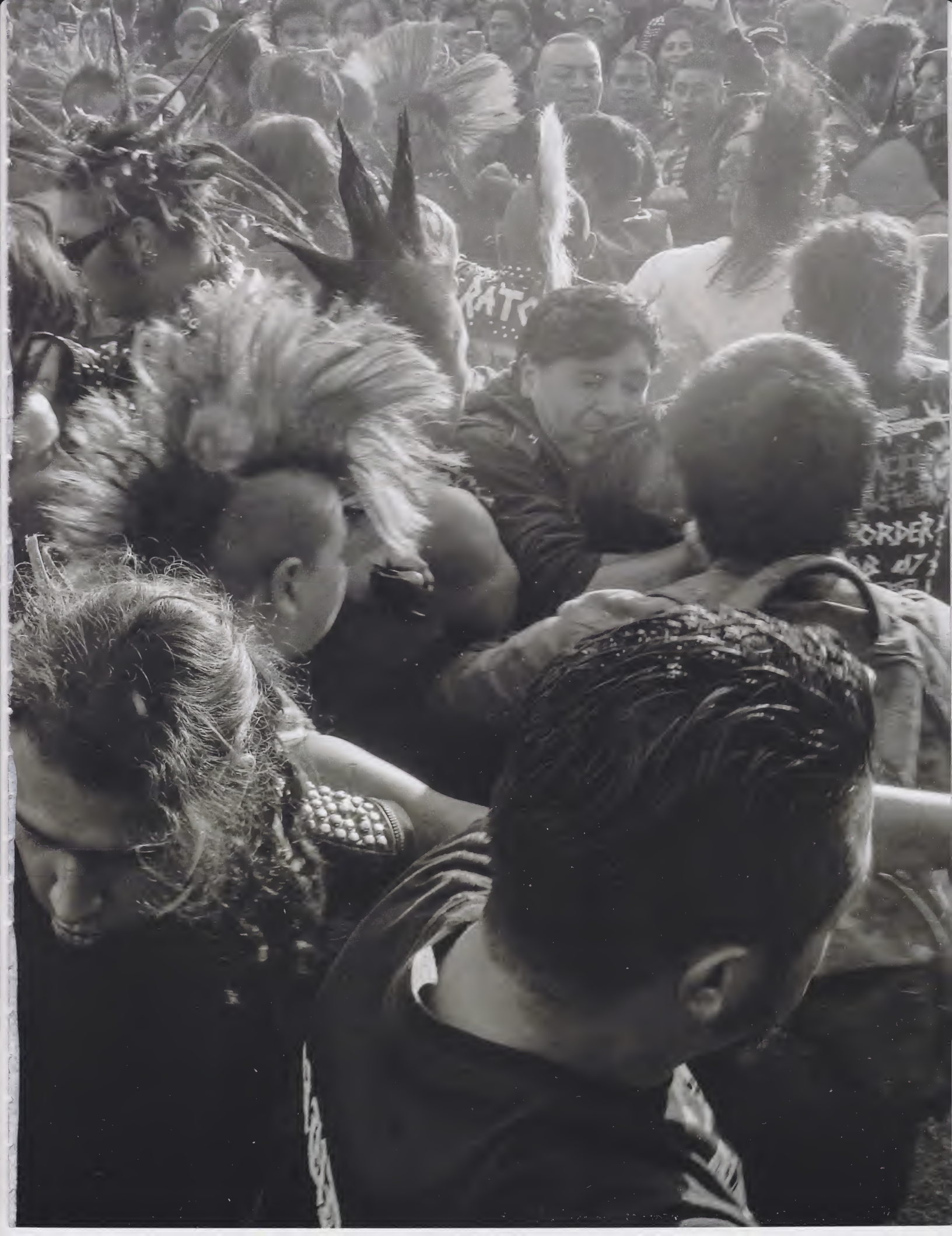


















# MXHDAZLAN

## MELAKA, MALAYSIA

### How did you get into punk?

To be honest I don't have any memory of getting into punk. I recalled that, long time ago my friends and I went to a punk show and that was how I started. The rest is history, I guess.

For me, being a punk not just being a punk. You should have the punk attitude. Move forward, DIY stuff, not afraid of being different, being critical and care about others (environment, circle of friends) because punk is love!

### How did you get into photography?

Zulkifli Maarof. Firdaus Zainal. Morpheuse. They are the reason about me being in photography. I used to learn how to take shot, photography principles and outing with them.

I shoot, I edit and I shared to them. Let them criticize my photos for me to develop my shooting style. Until now, they like it or now I still admire them. They are like my brothers.

### Do you should film, digital or a mix? Do you have a preference and why?

For me, both should be fine. I still shooting film and my fav film is Tri-X and Fomapan. Well, I don't mind shooting with films but I won't risk every frames shooting punk gigs. I limit myself shooting using analogue camera when I shoot portraiture of my family and

friends.

While shooting with digital allows me shooting unlimited (lol!) and deleting unwanted photos (lack of stories, expression, moments). But now, I'm learning to shoot and come out with meaningful shot. You know when you were got the privilege to shoot unlimited, it is hard to stop pressing shutter. :D

### Why do you shoot shows? Do you make photos beyond shows?

Why? Because of passion. I enjoy shooting shows than wedding. Shooting shows make me roaming around the space. Looking for right angle, right time to make pictures!

### What do you look for when you are taking photographs? What are you trying to convey?

Generally, in any genre of photography I'm looking for moment, specifically for punk shows, I was looking for moment, expression, stage-diving, crowd-surfing, crowd-moshing, sing-a-long, etc.

### What is your edit process like? Do you prefer your final images to be in black & white or color or a mix and why? If a mix, how do you decide if an image should be in one or the other?

I'll be using Lightroom for my post-processing. Some of my photos were b&w and some of them were colors. Depends on the ambience light.

### Which image of yours is your favorite and why? What makes it a successful image?

For me personally, all are my favourites. Basically, I will make sure the photos must have chaotic moments to attract eyes to focus to the pictures.

### What photographers do you admire the most (not just music photographers)? What is it about their work that appeals to you?

To be honest, I only inspired by band/music photographers. My photos were inspired by your works, Steve Gullick (@stevegullick), & Aqmal Hadi Shapee (@morpheuse)

### Have you had your work published (self or by others)? A photoshow? What would be your top three goals with your work?

Yes! My photos were published in photobook by Broken Noise Records Malaysia (@jimbotiram) and I participated an exhibition I don't remember which year.

3 goals? One, all photos I've created will be used as reference in hc/punk scene. Second, I'd like to tour, shooting DIY gigs especially in Japan. And third, collaboration with punk photographers for photobook(s) / hc punk bands / featuring in DIY photozine at least once.





BY

HOME MUSIC  
MATERAPIS

Randall

















BAD IDEA

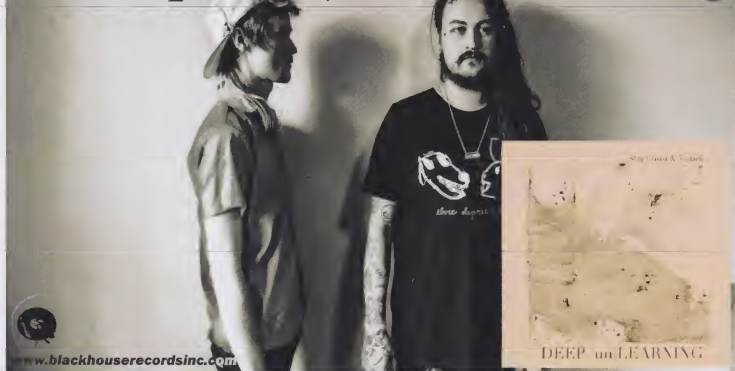




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"This is not  
noise made  
merely to  
disturb aes-  
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- The Wire



MOOR MOTHER  
ANALOG FLUIDS OF  
SONIC BLACK HOLES

Don  
Giovanni  
Records







# JES LAMB

## MONTREAL, QC

### How did you get into punk?

Honestly I'm young enough to have lucked out with having internet as a youth, I'm 27, and LimeWire, Kazaa, Napster, Geocities and blogs were my best friend. I heard Avril Lavigne say "punk" when I was 10 and I needed to know what it was.

### How did you get into photography?

Art was always enjoyable to me, but I was too indecisive and anxious to finalize projects. With photography you only have a split second to press a button, then you're done. I think the instant completion has a big appeal.

### Do you should film, digital or a mix? Do you have a preference and why?

I've never shot film. My mom's boyfriend had a point-and-shoot and I commandeered it. Film has always been so appealing but I'd be clueless where to start. Maybe one day.

### Why do you shoot shows? Do you make photos beyond shows?

I remember when I being 14 and taking photos at a Subhumans show but I don't remember why I started. I listened to punk for a while before that, and to finally be attending shows was a moment I was so happy for, I wanted to take it home with me. I still get shy and nervous that the flash is going to bother people though.

I do take photos outside of shows, friends, and travelling, etc. but not nearly enough.

### What do you look for when you are taking photographs? What are you trying to convey?

Energy. I won't lie, it's really boring to take photos of a band that doesn't move. If it's not movement, a facial expression with strong emotions is also good. I want to convey the experience of seeing them for people who weren't there, and for the people that want to remember it.

### What is your edit process like? Do you prefer your final images to be in black & white or color or a mix and why? If a mix, how do you decide if an image should be in one or the other?

I do color because it comes natural to me, but I admire black and white. The contrast and boldness—it seem more useful, easier to print, make an album cover or flyer out of. More "old-school," haha. I like to work with color though, because we see in color in real life. If my color-blind ex-boyfriend is reading this, well, fuck you!

### Which image of yours is your favorite and why? What makes it a successful image?

I have several... When I shoot, I normally have my shutter open for at least a second. Sometimes I catch the flash in my shot of another photographer, and it's so nice to see an imprint from another person in my shot. It's my most popular photo on Instagram, and one of my favorite people to photograph, so I'll choose this photo of Rosie playing in Zygome.

### What photographers do you admire the most (not just music photographers)? What is it about their work that appeals to you?

There are so many show photographers on Instagram I'm blown away by every day. Philip Mona-

han (@phijomo) and Teppei Miki (@beerd79) lately. Outside of music, my friend Will West (willwestphoto.format.com or @fought\_off\_ya\_dogs) is extremely talented, and how fun and adventurous he is really comes out in his work.

### Have you had your work published (self or by others)? A photoshow? What would be your top three goals with your work?

I've had some random little photo shows but nothing serious. I'd love to try out new equipment; I've only ever used one type lens and one type of camera. I don't like how much I've limited myself. The other goals would be to get things available for purchase online, and take this more seriously.

### Anything to add?

Pet peeves as a photographer include when people stare at you like you're a freak for bringing your "big fancy camera" so close to the stage. So often I see people recording on their smart phones, and those can be more expensive than what I'm shooting with. Don't stop having fun just because a photographer is nearby. I think most of us want to be ignored. Your feet in the air might improve my next photo, who knows?! A month ago a person tried to "protect" me from the crowd and put their arms up as if to be a wall. Don't be that person either!

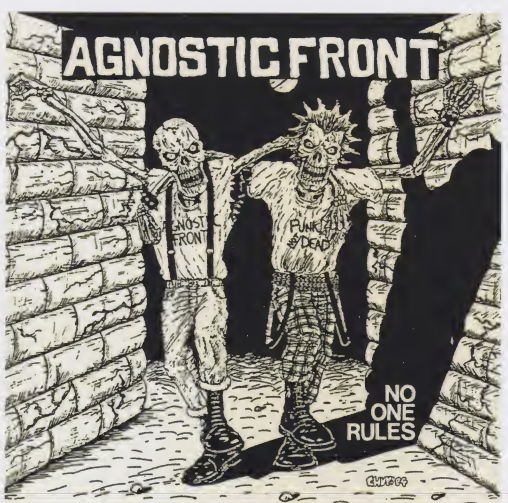
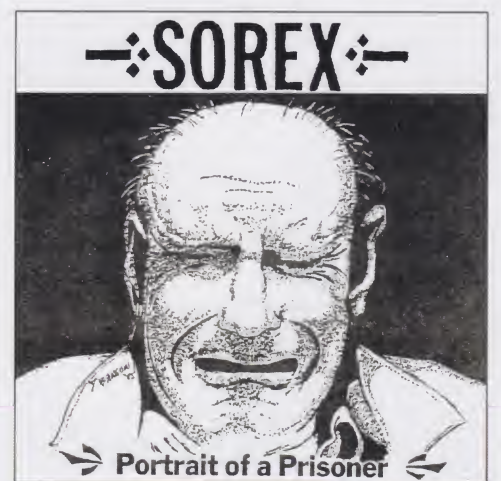
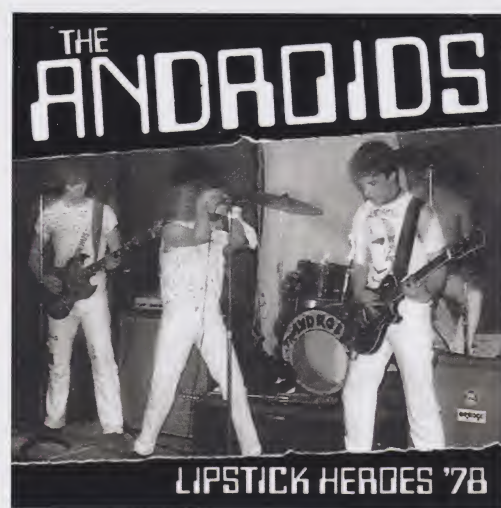
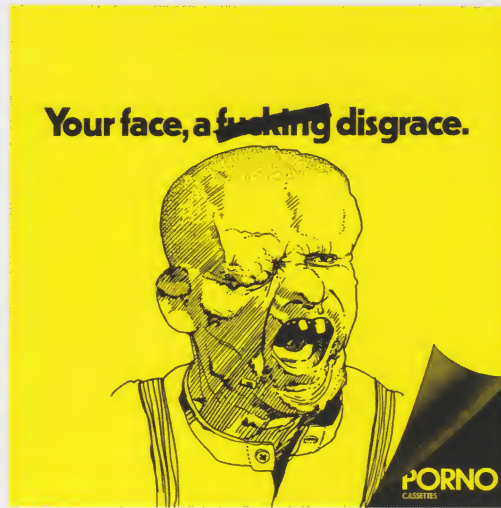














# RADIO RAHEEM RECORDS

**What would say you Radio Raheem's mission statement is—how would you describe it to someone unfamiliar with your output?**

Our only real mission is to put out high quality reissue records that don't suck. Since there are a million reissues coming out these days, we're just trying to do something that stands out.

**What was the genesis of Radio Raheem—was there a particular artist, record, demo, etc that was the catalyst to branch out from Painkiller?**

It's not really a branching out from Painkiller, as Rich did Parts Unknown Records before we started Radio Raheem, so I'd say it's more of a combination of our mutual interests. Parts Unknown kind of petered out around 2011—Rich and I had been discussing a bunch of reissues he wanted to do with Parts Unknown, so we just said fuck it, let's combine our brainpower and do something new. Right off the bat we knew we wanted to do an Abused record, but we also knew it was going to be hard to talk to the band into it, so we started out with a project that was easier to get together (the Blacktask LP) just to get our name out there. I think it's kind of funny we started out with an obscure metal record, but Rich knew the main guy from Blacktask from being around Philly so it was an easy release to get the ball rolling.

**What separates Radio Raheem from Painkiller? How do you determine if something should be released by one imprint or the other?**

It's easy because they're two separate labels run by two different duos (Painkiller Records = myself and Chris Corry, Radio Raheem = myself and Rich Warwick) and they operate as two separate business entities. Painkiller was started as, and has (almost) always been, a label for releasing records by our friends' bands. So it's pretty easy to split things—like if Arms Race or Waste Management want to do a new record it comes out on Painkiller Records, and if some obscure 80s band that we have no previous personal connection to wants to reissue their demo it comes out on Radio Raheem.

**Do you have concerns that the farther we get from the source material origination**

**point, do you have concerns that some things are just going to be lost to time? Have there been any projects you've started on which things just fell apart on?**

Definitely, I think about this stuff all the time. We've heard every possible story when hitting up bands for material: things getting lost in decades of moves, evictions, flooded basements, foreclosed storage lockers, you name it. Also we're at a point now where people who were playing in bands in the 70s and 80s are passing away, and their belongings fall into the abyss. That's why some of our releases have taken years to get from the initial agreement to the finished records—the first thing we try to do is secure the agreement and source material, and then put it in the to-be-released queue. That way the material isn't getting lost, even if it takes a couple years to actually get the record out. We have a lot of material in the vaults—whether it's for a possible release or not—that band members gave us because they would have otherwise tossed it.

We only ever had one release that totally fell apart. Our very first release was supposed to be a 7" for a Midwest band but there was a disagreement with one of the members of the artwork so the project got scrapped, but not until after the vinyl was pressed. So there are 600 coverless copies of this 7" that have been sitting in my basement since 2012, maybe they'll see the light of day at some point. There have also been a few times where we contacted bands and then the communication just fizzled out, sometimes it's hard to convince people that there's contemporary interest in their demo-only hardcore band that they haven't thought about in 35 years.

**Why do you feel "hardcore/punk/metal archeology" is important? Is there a part of you that has any concern of showcasing old bands/artists creates a narrative of so-called "salad days"?**

The last question leads into this pretty well—the simple answer is that if you don't preserve this stuff now, it's just going to get lost to the sands of time. Not that every note of obscure punk/hardcore/metal music ever recorded needs to be re-released, but I think there should at least be some record of it existing. Like that Universal Music Group vault fire that was making the rounds in the news this past summer—it's crazy to think that there were recordings in there that can literally never be heard again

because their existence was completely wiped out in the fire. I don't think trying to preserve things from the past necessarily gives off a "things were better back then" vibe, especially since neither Rich or myself were old enough to have witnessed most of the bands we release first hand.

**What would be the most difficult release to put together so far? As in who was hard to track down, get artwork from etc. Are most people generally receptive or do you run into anyone who either wants the past to stay buried or on the flip has delusions of grandeur which makes you just wanna drop it? On the flip have there been any projects where you were stunned by how humble and gracious the artists were?**

We've had a few polite no-thank-yous from bands that weren't interested in re-releasing their stuff, and we did have one "No Thanks vs. Gloom" type situation that resulted in the unreleased record mentioned a few questions up, but generally things run pretty smooth. (I should also note that Donna from No Thanks was super cool the one time I met her. Chris Corry and I went to her house in Berkeley around 2005 and she gave us free copies of the original No Thanks 7" and let us look through her old scrapbooks, and fed us some tasty homemade carrot cake after we turned down her weed brownies haha.) The Reign Of Terror 7" was a little tricky because all three members of the band are deceased and it wasn't easy tracking down family members to authorize the release. A funny one was the Vile 7", where it didn't come out for almost 5 years after it was initially planned because the original round of test presses sounded fucked up and we thought the tape was damaged. No one could find a better copy of the tape, so we just shelved the project. A few years later I pulled out the tape and realized that the pressure pad had fallen out. Oops. The other classic RR boner was the oversized Abused LP cover, I swear we didn't order those on purpose!

The easiest project so far is still the High and The Mighty 7", we asked Drew Stone about releasing it and he was at Rich's office in Manhattan literally the next day with the master tape and a disk full of scans. Drew is real easy to work with and has always been super helpful to us. I wish everything we did went that smooth.



OUT SOON!

# UNDER ATTACK

RICHMOND (VA)

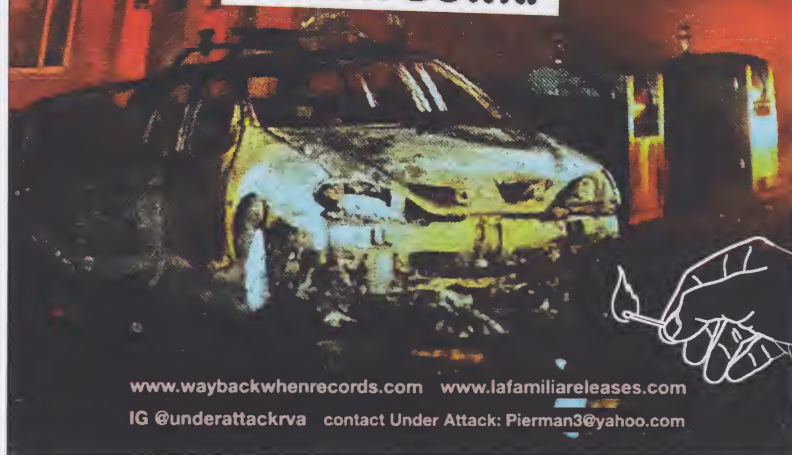
8 SONG

SPLIT 7"

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HOLLAND



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**What has been your favorite release so far and why? What is your current white whale?**

Right off the bat, the Abused LP was one that we were really hyped up on releasing. Getting to see Kevin Crowley's original drawings was a total HOLY SHIT moment, after having Nth generation xerox copies tacked up on my walls for years. Also hearing the 7", which is one of my all-time favorite hardcore records, from the original master tape as opposed to the tinny sounding original vinyl (which was apparently pressed at a plant that specialized in polka music), was a real ear opener. The Agnostic Front LP was another one that was really fun to put together — the audio everyone had obviously heard already so we wanted to go real overboard with the insert. I went on this digging spree looking for anything and everything I could get my hands on and we came up with a lot of crazy stuff for that one.

The real white whale for us was the Psychos LP. I think that was one of the first releases Rich and I talked about when we started the label in 2012, it had been on my mind since you (Mike) showed me the original demo tape from the MRR vaults back in what, 2001? We actually used the audio from that copy of the demo on the LP, so I'm glad you showed it to me back then. We still have a pretty lengthy "wish list" of releases we'd love to do, but I don't want to blow up the spot on anything at the moment.

**While I had heard of Bill Daniel and Drew Carolan prior to your release of their books, I wasn't familiar with Karen O'Sullivan—how do you track down artists to work with?**

We don't really have any particular approach for tracking people down, we just find stuff we want to put out and go from there. Sometimes we get suggestions/ referrals from other people (the Hellbent LP for example) and we've hooked up stuff like the Venom LP and Androids 7" by buying other reissues on their respective labels. We've also found people in random corners of the internet, like the Porno Cassettes 7" came about via an eBay auction, and recently we tracked down one old punk through her husband's personal website which led to us getting two huge bags of reels from her band mate that will eventually end up as three new releases. I don't think there's ever been a release we wanted to do where we couldn't find the band. The stuff's out there, you just need to have a lot of patience (and some luck) to find it. Facebook is pretty helpful too, as much as everyone pretends to hate it.

Karen O'Sullivan you may actually know from the *American Hardcore* book, most of the photos in the New York chapter are hers. When we were putting together the Abused LP, I was searching for photos and asked a few people if they knew how to get in touch with her and I found out that she was severely ill with MS, so I didn't pursue it. Fast forward a few years, and our friend and frequent collaborator Tony Rettman told us he was talking to (Somewhere Below 14th & East author/compiler) Ray Parada, and Ray was trying to get together a book of Karen's photos as a benefit for her medical expenses. We immediately offered to release it, and it took a while to get everything on track and finalized, but I think the book came out great and it's a really good time capsule of the early 80s New York City underground.

**What releases do you have in the pipeline?**

The next two releases are going to be:

- United Mutation *Dark Self Image* LP, which will contain all of their recordings up to and including the *Fugitive Family 7"*, plus a mountain of amazing original artwork from the band's archives
- The Worst *Worst Of The Worst* LP, which will be the Parts Unknown CD pressed to vinyl with expanded layout

Those should hopefully be out by the end of 2019, and then in early 2020 we should have releases from Krieg Kopf (mid 80's demo-only NYHC), Ultra Violence (more lost 80's NYHC), another United Mutation LP (expanded Rainbow Person sessions) and a bunch of other stuff that's confirmed but needs more work before they can be announced. There are a couple new books in the pipeline too, but again we're keeping them under wraps until things are a bit closer to completion.

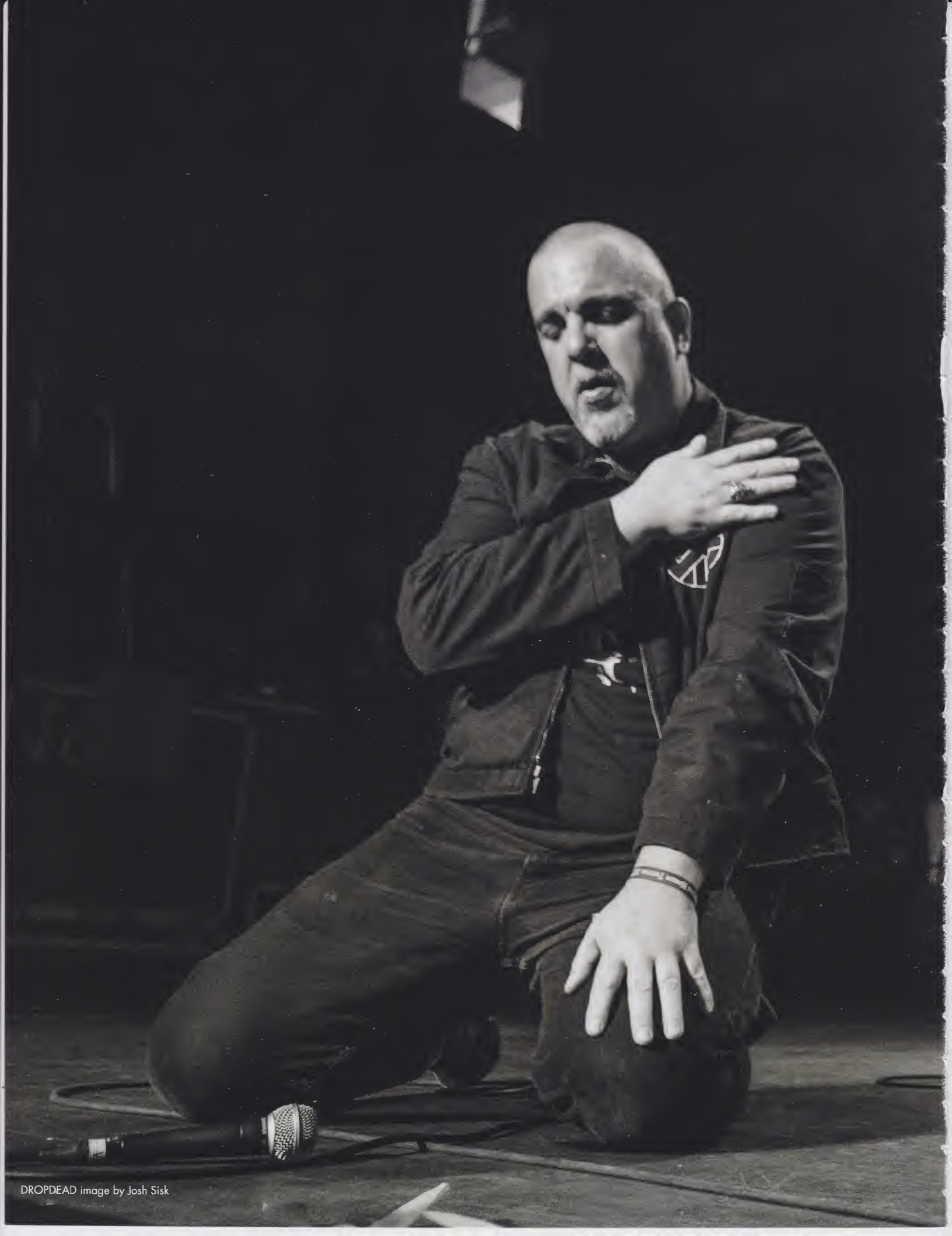
**Closing comments?**

Thanks for the interview. It always cracks me up when I see a reissue from another label and someone says, "I wish Radio Raheem did this instead". I guess that means we're doing something right.









DROPDEAD image by Josh Sisk



# DROPDEAD

**Let's start here: I've heard for years that you once got into a fight with Anal Cunt and they locked you in a McDonald's bathroom?**

Bob: That is ridiculous. (laughter) No. A long time ago, I definitely got into a fight with Anal Cunt. We had a brawl with them at a place called The Met Cafe in Providence. And basically they got on stage. I didn't really know much about them at the time. I didn't know that they get on stage and get confrontational and try to harass... GG Allin style antics or whatever you want to call it. They get on stage and they hit a girl in the audience and were just pressing every button they possibly could press and saying racial things. And then I just couldn't fucking take it anymore, and at one point, I charged to get across the stage and grabbed the lead singer, and slung him off the stage. And he landed in a pile of people who started kicking his ass and then a mini riot kinda broke out and I was coming back across the stage, and the drummer tried to jump me and then I got in a fight with the drummer and then just basically a whole fucking melee broke out in the club, and the cops ended up coming and gassing people, and I got arrested.

And it was just a shit show. Looking back at it, at how fucking ridiculous it is now, is hilarious. It seemed like such a serious thing at the time. But I can't... There was no way in good conscious I could have had a guy like that come to town.

**Of course not.**

Bob: And say all sorts of racial shit on stage and hit a girl in the audience and this, that, and the other. There was no way I was able to just not do anything about that. So that's what went down. Then the whole band then attacked the guitar player at one point. It turned into a shit show. So that really happened.

**I also heard were wearing devil horns when you got arrested...**

Bob: I was, it was a Halloween show. So I'm completely painted red, with devil horns and everything, and so I'm fighting it... I'm in a fucking full-on blow with a guy dressed as the devil. And then I got arrested, one of my horns broke off and I'm like... I got a cape on... It was a cartoon Spinal Tap moment. That's all I could say. There's a film of it somewhere online somewhere, like the deepest part of the web, a little snippet of what went on, but nobody could

ever... You could write a whole movie about that night. 'cause it was that insane. At one point, apparently there was... Seth Putnam's girlfriend was dressed up like Slash from Guns n' Roses, and when I walked off stage, she had a bottle in her hand and was gonna break it over my head. And the guitar player from the band As The Sun Sets saw her getting ready to wind up on me and thought it was a guy and punched her right in the face and knocked her cold the fuck out. So that's another part of that story.

**So the quintessential Dropdead thing was, "fucking assholes don't get it." (laughter) And there's this kind of projected anger and rage that it feels like the band has become more refined, in some ways, it feels like now it's more focused, and a lot more real. Would you say that's true?**

Bob: I say that age is probably something to do with it. And life experience, and education, and activism, all of those things helped to make me, and made me a better writer, and more thoughtful, and less, just brutal. You know? I have a lot more empathy in my heart these days, and a little less anger.

Ben: Yeah, fucking assholes don't get it [laughter], but yeah, he, in the past was definitely a little more dangerous than nowadays, other than the occasional microphone swing. He's a fucking big gentle guy, and people assume he's like this you know, menacing, mean person and it's totally the opposite of what's going on.

**It feels like in some ways, it's more confrontational, but less physically confrontational, like your live presence. Is that something to do with age, or is that something to do with...**

Bob: There might be some age built into that. There's also many, many injuries built into it, including I had a catastrophic motorcycle accident within the last two years. But I think that through the years, a couple of times, when I got into people's faces, watching them actually gets... Affected me where that's not really what I wanted to do, and also being aware of hurting people was another thing that made me pull back a little bit as far as getting really intense in people's faces. I don't know, there's a mixture of a lot of things. Age again. (laughter) I'm a 50-year-old man now, so I'm not 18, full of rage and throwing the mic stand randomly into the audience, hoping it doesn't hit somebody in the head.

Ben: So it's always funny to see him, scaring the shit out of somebody and two seconds later, anti-zero shoe or fucking gives him a hug or whatever, it's pretty good comedy. That stuff is... He could tell if he's making somebody super uncomfortable and he's very good at you know, making people know he knows they're there. In the old days you mighta got hit with a chair or a mic stand or something.

**The mic stand was the thing I was thinking of. I've definitely seen that.**

Ben: Yeah. I've got some scars that came with the territory.

Bob: Yeah, I was pretty famous for doing shit like that back in the day, I didn't take any responsibility for my actions. And now, you know what I mean, honestly, being a grown-ass man now, you bust a microphone stand over somebody's head you can get sued, you can do this, you can do that. And I don't feel that kind of anger towards my audience as much anymore, where now I feel more of a teacher's role or a role of wanting to be a leader of sorts with what we represent, so I don't know, it's just, bands go through phases. I'm not a young man anymore, now I'm a middle-aged man. I think it's simple, something as simple as that. I still have the extreme rage in my heart. Nothing has taken a slide as far as what I believe in and what I think about, but I just don't get physical about it, where somebody might get taken out. Every once in a while I still go into that mode if it hits me... I try to be honest about my emotions. I'm not trying to put on airs. I think that's where I'm coming from. I'm a very politically active person, and I try to focus on those type of things and... Performance is performance. I try to act how I actually feel on stage.

**One of the things that is impressive is I think when you have bands, your generation, my generation or people involved who are still... The things they talk about, they still care about it and they still try to present those ideas.**

Ben: And we're put to shame 'cause we got to go to the UK and we play with like Anti-System. I think that those people are the fucking nicest people. And they all have like a decade or 15 years on us and are still doing it. So there's still an earlier generation of people that are out there and still give the shit to. Which is very encouraging to see even for us—these people that choose the music we listen to, are out



there. Some of them are super super fucking nice and you super humble people, it makes you feel like a lot of this stuff actually means something.

**The band's been around since '91. But you and Ben and Brian have been playing since '89, correct?**

Bob: Somewhere around that. Yeah, we became friends. I basically put up just like any other guy. I put a flyer around town, and I met Brian, the drummer, and we became friends. We were like immediately nerdy, punk friends. And then Ben answered the ad after that. We met him and he was a super cool guy. And we just got together just through a simple flyer.

Ben: Yeah... I met Bob and Brian in '89, played together for a year before that. So '89 to '91, we did a band where Bob was playing guitar and I was singing. We just... That was really just not working out. I learned to play guitar watching Bob play it. [laughter] I just took what he did, and did it faster.

**What do you attribute the longevity of the band to?**

Bob: It really is, we've had... We've fought cats and dogs through the years. All of us. I mean, nothing ever damaging, where we were never friends again, but we've been brothers. It's the kind of thing that really kept us together. As a matter of fact, last night we had a little Dropdead family get-together and carved pumpkins together. So we do a lot of family-esque things together. We've continued to... We get together, we all go out to eat. We make it like a family thing. So all of us are kind of estranged from our families in one way or another. So we all kind of just came together in that respect, too. The amount of time that we spend together in vans and on the road and sleeping on floors. And for 30 years now, you can't help but be close to people, you spent that kind of time with.

These guys are my family. And actually in my older years now, playing with this band, it's made it better than ever because of that. Now, I'm on the road, I feel comfortable and safe, and it's a family environment, that I'm going out with my brothers

Ben: We talk about it all the time, it's like we basically turned into a weird dysfunctional family. We're just a bunch of weirdoes doing our thing. But we've been doing it together a long time and it's still fun, I mean there are a lot of aspects of it that are not super fun. But we have fun when we hang out and we have a fun when we actually get around and get to see friends everywhere—that's the thing we tend to get most excited about now, is catching up with friends.

**Do you feel building that network of friends is kind of the biggest success around Dropdead for yourself. Is that maybe one of the most fulfilling things?**

Ben: I like to think so. I mean I... It's pretty humbling to know that somebody that you met almost 30 years ago still smiles when they see you, and they make an effort to come out and say hi, and vice-versa. If you go somewhere, traveling for whatever reason, you can just reach out to people you know. It's like having a big family, it's pretty cool. It's a real time where sometimes, when you don't see somebody, for 15 or 20 years, and then you see them, and

they're like, "Jesus man. Has that much time passed? Because like I still feel like that young 20-something kid that didn't know shit about shit." It's been cool, seeing friends, and then you see your friends having families, and some friends of mine have kids that are fucking graduated from school, adults now, it's pretty nuts.

**To shift a little—one of the big themes around Dropdead has always been animal rights, and resistance politics in general. How would you describe lyrical themes of what's coming up on the new record, with the new demo that just came out?**

Bob: Well, certainly, Trump has giving me a fodder of... Just the madness of today's politics and everything that's going on gave me a lot to think about. I mean, there's certainly a lot of things about right-wing nature and philosophies on this record, and fighting against them and standing against racism and there's certainly a lot of spotlight on Trumpian politics and things like that, but there's also a lot of animal rights issues on the record. I don't think anybody who buys the record is gonna get surprised with some surprise politics we've suddenly adapted. I think if you know what Dropdead stands for and has always stood for, you're gonna get a Dropdead record. But I think it's a little clearer in its focus as for what we're writing about, and I would even say so as far as the way I sang it this time, I tried to be a little less just screaming my brains out, and focused that people could hear the lyrics, because I thought it was important for this particular record.

Ben: I gotta say, probably now more than ever, to be honest... we're living the lyrics that we were writing about... I think we're now doing that more than we ever have been. It's actually more serious now, you know? It's real weird, the older you get, the more you understand shit and, yeah, the more you realize how important some of this stuff is, more so than just fucking yelling shit through a microphone.

**When you get to the point where you are now in your life, has it just become something you do, or is it because it's part of who you are?**

Ben: Yeah, it's an every day thing. It's not like I'm doing this 'cause it's the band thing. This is just normal for us, I guess. I was talking to my girlfriend about it, and she's like, "Do you even think about this stuff anymore?" I'm like, "No, I just do, I just live this way." [laughter] I try not to think about it too much 'cause it gets me really fucking upset.

**How do you align your actual activism, with just doing a band, or is the band...**

Bob: My thing is, and I'm very fortunate, is the band seems to be as... People seem to be following it more than ever right now. So, we're being invited to these huge shows, a lot of festivals, and stuff like that, so I'm able to be on a stage in front of thousands of people sometimes. And for me, I mean when I'm screaming at the top of my lungs, with this furious music behind me, I don't expect every lyric to be able to be understood or anything like that, it's extreme music, so that's why I talk in between songs a lot of times. Not every song or whatever, but I think it's really important to talk to people about what the songs are about, and to just have a conversation about the lyrics and the philosophy that we stand for. For me, as a 50-year-old man, I can't

imagine I would start another hardcore punk thrash band at this point in my life. But this has given me the opportunity to have a soapbox to discuss things that are really meaningful to me and my philosophy as a human being.

**Bob, you're a big peace punk fan, is that correct?**

Bob: Yeah, those are the bands I discovered, first, initially. Bands like Dead Kennedy's and stuff, Black Flag. But when I stumbled onto anarcho-punk, particularly UK anarcho-punk, it had a giant effect on me because of the information that those bands were putting into their lyrics and their records. You would buy a Conflict record or you would buy an Icons of Filth record and there would be a booklet in there with all sorts of eye opening things that I hadn't thought about prior to that because I was like a Metal Head first as a young kid, 14-15, I discovered Venom, Metallica, and all that stuff. And then I discovered punk after that and being exposed to all those politics and stuff, I would just rabidly consume all of those booklets that they had, and was just filling my head with thoughts I never had before, about things I never thought of before, and it was very influential and very educational. And to this day is probably my favorite kind of punk.

**Would you say that that was your biggest influence lyrically?**

Bob: You know, it was and it wasn't. It was at that point, when I was getting into all the anarcho-punk and stuff, that I was reading the references of where some of these was particularly animal rights stuff was coming from. So, and it led me into doing things like going to the library and looking up books by a guy like Peter Singer, who wrote the book "Animal Rights" and it turned me onto a whole this... I just followed the path from there about what was going on in the animal industry. And Gary and all this other stuff, and that was the tip-of-the-iceberg for me. And I probably wouldn't, I might not have leaned that way if it wasn't for discovering some of those early anarcho-punk bands from England, who opened me up to all this information.

**I know about Pete Singer's book. What other books or writers would you kind of recommend?**

Bob: These days... These days there are a lot of activists that I follow like Gary Yourofsky, James Aspey, Earthling Ed, Paul Watson, Wayne Hsiung from Direct Action Everywhere. Now I do some work in town with Anonymous for the Voice list, Vegan Outreach in Rhode Island, Vegan Awareness. Everything's at your fingertips at this point and if you really wanna do some research just type in dairy or type in animal agriculture, man. And if that doesn't open your eyes to what the fuck is going on, I don't know what will.

**It is interesting the way information is disseminated and music is disseminated then versus now...**

Bob: It's amazing how easy you can get it now. You had to work for it back in the day. There was only on the East Coast here you had to go to New York City, there was a place up in Saugus, Massachusetts. There was only a few places, and I only knew them to get my punk records because I had previously been buying my heavy metal records that



were being imported from England at these particular record stores, and then I just flipped from those bins to the punk bins once I discovered anarcho-punk. But there was only a few places. Matter of fact I'm old enough to remember when Newbury Comics was just as probably as big as my bedroom when there was three guys in there with their feet up on the table hawking DYS and SSD records. So there was only a few places you could go and you had to work for it, you had to be into it like any other nerdy thing. You had to dig for it.

Ben: People just don't get information the same way. So... That's really changed things a lot. Going from writing letters and trading tapes to... One day you can find out about some crazy Japanese hardcore band, and you can have their full discography in a day. Back in the... not even that early days late 80s, early 90s, you were still trading tapes with people of your stuff.

### **Where are you at with the new LP?**

Ben: The LP is all recorded now—we went in in August with Kurt and did 26 songs, which I think we whittled down to like 22 at this point. And we'll see what it ends up being. Like the old days when if something doesn't make the cut, it ain't getting out.

Bob: I might go back and redo a couple of songs vocally. I did some songs I'm truly not happy with yet. Maybe they'll make the cut, maybe they won't. Ben gave me a mix the other day of what I think he wants regarding the song, all the songs we have, and I had a couple of differences, there was one or two songs that he left off that I really liked. So it still needs to be discussed what the lineup of the songs is gonna be. But we have to go in and mix it and then it has to be mastered. So I would be surprised if it comes out this year. I'm thinking early. Ben's really in charge of that type of stuff. But I may, I might go back in and re-work a couple of vocal things.

### **Have you thought about doing something on your Bandcamp page, having reference links to books, articles, music, etc that inspired you?**

Bob: I hadn't thought of that 'cause I don't really think about online stuff. But that's not a bad idea, I mean once we sit down and get into the mixing phase of things and as we start to go forward with all of that. I don't even know if Ben has artwork per se, that he's thought of at this point. He's a guy that I noticed, once the pressure gets on, that's when he works really well. He puts the pedal to the metal. So we haven't really gotten to that point yet, but it has been something that we have discussed as far as references and stuff, it has been talked about.

### **Yeah. So are you guys going to do shows off that LP, or is it just going to be... You're going to tour, dare I say?**

Ben: We've got no plans for that currently. I mean, we've put it out, and let it be out for a while, and see how it goes. But I think at this point, we're still playing one or two shows a month, wherever sounds fine. Doing a tour, it's... I guess if it made sense, it would be cool, but I think everyone's got family and life stuff going on that makes that a little more complicated now. Maybe like a 10-day thing, like we've done a few times in the last few years. But it's definitely harder now—when we were fucking in our 20s, we would just sink all our own boats and drive away, and then come back to fucking chaos.

### **Closing thoughts?**

Bob: I'm really looking forward to putting a new record out. I hope people like it. It's more of what we've always done but a little more advanced in the sound and lyrically. Every album that we put out, I hope I advance a little bit more as a writer, as a communicator, as a philosopher or whatever you wanna call what we're doing. And I'm hoping people really read the lyrics and think about it and hopefully make some changes for a better planet. I know it sounds big and hopeful but that's what I really feel. I want this to be something that people grasp... to wanting a better world. That's the bottom line of the whole thing.

THE OF  
END THE WORLD







# 11PM RECORDS

**Let's start with a cliché, how did you get into hardcore?**

It's definitely living in Richmond, a thousand percent. Growing up outside of Richmond, listening to Bracewar was just something we did. No matter who you were. That was a universal... Or Down to Nothing, but those bands weren't really my thing. Then I got into Government Warning. That was the first punk show I ever went to, I was 16 or 17. And I got into that through RVA Magazine. Their first free issue had a list of local bands and I listened to every single one of them.

**What was it about Government Warning that appealed to you more than Bracewar or Down to Nothing?**

Richmond is a punk town. It has been so for so long that I feel like in a lot of ways it's more weighed down by its legacy than has been helped. I mean, jocks or preppy dudes at my high school... they were all listening to Down to Nothing, Bracewar—I was more into ska and indie music, I was more of a nerd or whatever but, I also liked skate punk like Rancid, all that shit. Government Warning was a band like that for a lot of people. Kind of like how Night Birds are now, where it kind of has elements of skate punk, but it's definitely a hardcore band. So I saw them, then I went to the second No Way Fest a few months after, and those are still a lot of my favorite bands.

So that's sort of where I'm at with the label... I left Richmond, for awhile, then came back and was doing my band, Mad Existence—it was a hardcore punk, youth crew, weird little mishmash, in a time when a lot of bands were doing that similar style.

Everyone loved 86 Mentality. I love 86 Mentality. There were bands like Pure Disgust, The Flex—they were the big deal. So I started meeting these kids, like actual kids, good five or six years younger than me, who were coming to Richmond, and they would know about certain bands from the No Way-era, but they might not know about all of them. They had probably grown up more on bands like Down to Nothing, but they were getting into this as a thing from the past—they were doing these bands that were influenced by 86 Mentality, they were really into Government Warning. And so we just started becoming friends 'cause I was really inspired by them. It's kind of what we were doing in high school with 80s hardcore bands, they were doing for the stuff that I was in high school for. So I started meeting all these people four or five years ago, and that was the original foundation of the label, was us just trying to be in bands influenced by that era.

**The first release you did was your own band, Deviant—was the intention with the label always you were going to do something more, or was it just, I'm gonna do my own band?**

I had told my band, "Look, we're all getting older. I wanna do my band, on a label I'm gonna start. If it goes well, I'll put out other records. If not, then I won't." And then we did this one tour last March down South, where every single band that played with us, was good. Every. Single. One. It was mind-blowing. We toured so much this past year. We did a Canada-Chicago loop thing, we did up to New York, and then we did another trip down South. We did those two weeks apart from each other, so we were constantly going. I would go to these parts of the country and a lot of them don't have the infrastructure that Richmond has—they don't

have other people that are supporting them or don't necessarily know how to do things. I'd put out the Deviant record and I was like, "I wanna get with a bunch of these people and help them out." Like, the bands that were inspiring me, because I don't think I would have found out about a lot of them if I hadn't done that tour.

**Did you want the label to have a Southeast, Southern perspective, or is it more about like... I mean, I know you've done the Gazm (from Montreal) record but....**

When I started, I wanted it to be all bands from the South. There's this label in Miami that my friend runs, called Invisible Audio. They are tape-only and they do demos for all these Florida bands and Southern bands... they did so many tapes in one year, it's kind of crazy. A lot of the bands weren't necessarily able to tour, 'cause of vans or just member changes and stuff. They were my main inspiration and I wanted to do records for some of the bands—get them to take it more seriously, start working on helping them tour and stuff, 'cause I don't just put out the record and go away. I usually am always like, "Can I help with anything?" or "I had this idea," or I'll link people together. But now, I feel like because Protocol and maybe Jackyl have toured more, there's more bands in the country they're sort of linking on, so it's definitely, already even two releases in, not just a Southern thing because it's already expanded some...

**So what is the main driver behind doing the label for you at this point?**

I'm trying to bring back the 80s US hardcore sound. But not even bring it back; 'cause it's already there,



I'm just trying to push it. I'm trying to, partially, give Richmond a new identity through it and... What else? I don't know. There are a lot of weird motives I have about this stuff, but I'm kind of trying to create a new... A lot of labels are based almost around cliques. You can tell you're like, "Oh this band started. These people are in it, they're gonna be on this label," you know what I mean? I'm really trying to make sure most of the bands get along.

For a lot of these bands, if we put them in the same room, they would end up becoming friends anyways. It's the same kinda people all over the country making music. They're sort of... A lot of them have very different backgrounds, but sort of similar backgrounds. A lot of them are music nerds. You can just talk to them about any genre and they're just all about it. And a lot of them are promoters in their cities, they're highly involved in DIY, in every aspect.

**When you're thinking about your label, what labels inspire you? Do you see yourself being more flash in the pan with it, or do you want it to be a long time label?**

I really like hobby labels, if that makes sense, that's what I refer to myself. I like labels that are a little bit more like flash in the pan, but capture something partially by accident 'cause they're just doing what they're into. I'm inspired by these flash in the pan labels where... they were in the same position we are now where it's just, nobody's making the kind of music we want, so we're all making it.

I really liked these labels that existed for a little bit called Feeble Minds and Drug Conscience. Some of their releases were cool, some of them weren't, but they were really cool... I was really into Fashionable Idiots, I think that label's good. Stuff that is like... I'm also really inspired by Deranged. I can't not mention Deranged Records, classic label-in my mind it's a total modern classic. That label is a little bit longer lasting but... If this wave ends, I think the label will probably end with it or it'll change in some way. It'll change its name. I don't wanna be a monolith. I wanna treat the bands as good as possible, but I don't wanna be some label that's bogged down by catalog or whatever.

**Is there any concern at all with wanting to keep things in print even if you're not really actively doing the label anymore? Or is it more just sell 300 or 500 copies and move on?**

I honestly wonder... and I wondered this before I did the label, but I wonder how much putting out vinyl actually does for the band, or music in general. Or if people are going to still buy records in two years. And I've made it so I'm okay with it. I'm definitely pushing it and trying to get more people to buy records as much as possible, but it's interesting to have the conversation with people where it's like, "Why do you buy records? Why don't you buy records?" Do you know what I mean?

**It's definitely something I think about a lot, 'cause I sold my record collection ten years ago. I don't own records anymore. Everything I do is digital at this point. But I still views tangible objects as being important. How does that play into it?**

I always tell the bands that the cover is way more important than whatever you put on it. 'Cause 90% of the people aren't ever gonna pull the record out and listen to it. I wonder, sometimes, if I just packed

the records without the actual record, how many people would notice?

**Yeah. Do you really think that's a thing, though?**

Yeah, I'm positive.

**That people never listen to the records?**

I have a few peers that are pretty big dorks about records but it seems to be cordoned off into genres. Being a Japanese hardcore collector or a Black Metal collector, where that's still a part of the genre, while with hardcore I don't always know that it is anymore-I think that for a lot of the older fans of hardcore, it is, so to legitimize younger bands, you have to press it on vinyl. I really believe this, 'cause I think that a lot of the YouTube stuff that happens was more flash in the pan because it wasn't really pressed as a record. Do you know what I mean?

**So how many records are you pressing for bands days?**

I'm doing 300 pretty much, and I'm doing a lot of it split with other labels, but a lot of it is just I'm trying to do everything as fast as possible. I'm trying to go into maximum overdrive, so I don't wanna lose that much money all at once. So I'm trying to keep it buoyant, I don't know if that makes any sense. I don't really know what even life is gonna be like two years from now, so I'm trying to do as many releases as possible from this group of people. I'm trying to do 10 releases in a year.

**Ten releases in a year?**

Patrick: So the year started in February. I have the other two lined up, I'm gonna line one up maybe tonight. So we're gonna be at seven and then I'll probably do three after that. I'm really serious-I'm trying to do 10 a year. It's gonna be so stressful but...

**How are you distributing your records?**

Ebullition, Revelation, it's the same people, do you know what I mean? I go to stores personally a ton, probably honestly more than any other label. Like when I travel, so much, and I use some of it as an excuse for this label, and I try to talk to as many people as possible and give physical ads out to people. Just the ad saying, "We Won't Let Hardcore Punk Die" is a trick in a way, 'cause that means that I perceive that it's dying or the people perceive that it's dying, and it's like, "Support It." The "we" isn't just me, or the label. I'm saying "we," as in a scene. If you like these bands, support them.

**You are doing 300 copies of a record, do you think that that's the limit, do you think you could actually do 1,000?**

Well, I did 500 of the Gazm and it's going alright. But it's definitely the kinda thing where eventually, it will all sell out, but it's probably gonna take a few years.

**Do you think that is how it actually is or do you think that's the perception of how it is?**

I think that's how it actually is, but here's the thing-When we grow, we grow together with the label, and if I can get enough releases that people like, people would just start buying all of it. It's what a lot of labels that started out of hobby labels have happen

to them. For example, in Richmond specifically, Feel It and Beach Impediment sell out of so many copies of records. They sell thousands of records.

**So the 10 records--what do you have coming up?**

I got the Armor 7-inch... they're from Tallahassee. I met them 'cause Deviant played with them at their second show in Orlando in March. And they're really good, really tight. They just did an East Coast tour in October with Protocol.

Then there's this band Sniper Culture from Chicago, they're just really cool. And they both are similar sounding and very, very good. I'm excited. They're gonna be two of the best records of the year, for sure.

I really wanna put out, help Cadenaxo from Mexico City put out an LP 'cause I love that band.

**Is there a record you really wish you had put out, is there something that stands out that you're like, "Oh, this is amazing?"**

Oh, I wanted to put out the Public Acid LP, but I wasn't ready in time. That was for sure what I wanted my first or second release to be. And I wanted to put out the Gumming LP too. But the timing was off.

**You mentioned earlier the idea forming a clique of bands, does that sorta thing matter more to you than the music itself?**

No, the music is definitely most important, but I wouldn't wanna work with someone I didn't respect. I'm also not the kinda label that's gonna do it all for you. It's something we're doing together.

It's more of, we're not trying to reinvent any wheel-in some ways it's like a tribute. We're trying to give back to this thing that existed before us. We grew up going to these kinda shows, we wanna be in a band that plays that style, so that more people can get into it and while there's definitely boundaries that are being pushed, but it's not like we are experimenting on record or anything, do you know what I mean?

**We kinda talked a bit about future of label, but I guess if there's anything else you wanted to add, and about the label purpose, etc**

I don't know, you don't have to grow out of hardcore punk-acting like some other genre's more mature or whatever, is just total bullshit. It's just like hardcore punk is simple and it exists to be simple. You add different elements to it, which is fine. But it exists as a simplistic art form in the same way... I don't know... Pop music is. And I think that a lot of the way kind of the people that are on my label listen to pop music, too, when they realize that it's sort of not that far off when it gets down to it. Die-hards of any genre are gonna live a certain lifestyle. I honestly, a lot of times, even wonder how different their lives are. Someone that's like, I don't know, a die-hard jazz musician. How different are they than punks? I wonder. You know what I mean? They're giving it all up for art. And a lot of what punks do is basically center their life around their art.



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# DWID HELLION

## INEGRITY

**There's a lot of references to the occult in Integrity's work--in the lyrics, artwork, etc almost an obsession - I was doing a bit of research and saw that you are friends with Boyd Rice. How did you come to meet Boyd Rice? What first initially drew you to him?**

I was at his house yesterday actually.

**Oh really?**

He lives in Denver, we had just played there... When I was growing up, my parents were very religious--obsessively religious and they would constantly scare me by dangling the punishment of hell over my head--fire and brimstone and such, and I started to wonder, "Is this real?"

At the same time, I started noticing that kids my age were appearing on milk cartons--there was this thing called the "Satanic Panic" where the media would say, "Satanic cults are doing this and Satanic cults are doing that..." Then also there was the PMRC which was--for people who aren't familiar or are too young to know what it is--that was a group of people, mostly housewives of politicians in Washington DC, who decided that it was their duty as Americans to censor music to only be music that they personally felt was acceptable and using the influence of their spouses to attain government aid in enforcing their ideas--which is incredibly unconstitutional but they still were able to do it and that's why we have the sticker that says "parental guidance--explicit lyrics" later as I ended yeah, and then the lyric, thing and all of that.

So I grew up with all of that type of thing, around me--I wanted to know what this "devil cult" is and where is it and if it's real and is there a hell? All of these questions.

I started doing research and finding out about people who might know about cults and the esoteric... one of the people that I met was Boyd--he was writing in a lot of different books and magazines at the time about his philosophies and these mysteries... That's how I met him, based off of researching death cults, satanic cults and end of the world cults... back then, he started out as an avant-

garde artist and prankster, he sorta married both together quite well and he would use the pranking as a way of making people look at things from a different perspective. And some people don't realize that that's what he's about. They see things a little bit too flat and one dimensional on a... and it's not actually like "that."

It serves its purpose because it creates a ripple; it creates an uncomfortable emotion for people.

**I feel like late 70s, into the mid 80s especially, there used to be this whole prank culture that was a big deal I think, my Frank Discussion from the Feederz--from the press release for their first show which local officials took to be a terrorist communiqué to firing an assault rifle loaded with blanks at their first show to the "Bored With School" campaign which caused him to be forced out of Arizona or face arrest... are you familiar with him?**

No, not really...

**You might find it interesting--my favorite thing he did was when they glued sandpaper to their debut LP sleeve so it would destroy everything around it... it's sort of the same kind of thing Boyd does, pushing people's buttons, trying to get you engage into a conversation that maybe they are not comfortable having...**

**Are you still just as interested in those dichotomies, between good and evil, the occult, so on so forth, as you were when the band first started?**

I have a more handle on it now, it was more a curiosity and obsession--I guess my hobby, but I have a better understanding of how everything works now.

**With the more recent there's more general references to the devil, hell, etc. Is that a conscious shift away from a focus on a specific cult to a more general discussion of notions of evil?**

I wouldn't say that I see it that way. I guess maybe that's just a perspective I don't think there is much

difference except for maybe that the language has expanded over the years to be more poetic... it's really just all based on how I'm feeling at the time... sometimes it's more abstract and sometimes it's more clear cut and sometimes it's a combination of both, and that's a great part of what I do... it's interpretive which allows the people who listen to the music to place themselves within the music, they can make it personal for them--their contribution gives them a sense of ownership to it, and also creates this different level that allows them to be a part of it...

**I wanna shift a little and talk about Japanese punk--specifically Sakevi and GISM, would you say that he's had an influence, on your artwork, music, stage persona, etc?**

He was an influence for sure but I never saw what they looked like on stage, until the mid-90s... though I wish that I had a flamethrower who doesn't, right? The Detestation artwork was done by Randy Uchida, though.

**Really? I always thought that it was Sakevi...**

Yeah--I love collage though--starting off with the Dada movement with Max Ernst, John Hartfield... Hartfield really was sort of like the blueprints of what punk was to become visually...

**Yeah, I mean, Discharge used his image...**

Discharge used a lot of Hartfield... the dove on the bayonet. You know that was very political artwork he designed at the time to counter the rise of the National Socialist Party in Germany. He was a German guy, an artist and he was using newspaper clippings and manipulating them to make a statement against this rising political movement that at the time he didn't probably imagine just like American people didn't imagine that a reality star would rise to be President...

**Do you feel Integrity is more of an art project than a band?**

It was always an art project. It's about myself and what I'm interested in--I'm not gonna explain it to



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everybody to hold their hands, spell everything out to them because that's boring. Do you really wanna read a review of a film that tells you the spoilers? Whats the point of that? And at the same time, a lot of my understanding of how music is created came from my art school background came from my interest in collage, came from my interest in the Dada movement, my interest poetry collage, which we has referred to as cut up and commonly attributed to Brion Gysin and William H Burroughs but it actually started long before them with Tristan Tzara and André Breton—using the juxtaposition of words to create new perspectives, to trigger the synapses in your mind, causing them rewire you can understand and maybe make you feel a little more alive sometimes or maybe not. I don't really approach it from a pretentious level like that.

I don't really go around saying, "Oh this is art" with a beret on with a scarf and monocle. It's just... That was my background, and that's how I understand music...

**What is it about Dada that inspires what you are doing with Integrity as well as your own artwork? Is it just one of many things? The first among equals?**

Just one of many... it's gonna be the difficult continuance throughout this interview. You're not gonna find one answer to any of this stuff, 'cause there's not one answer. Nobody is that... well hopefully no one is that black and white... I guess there are possibly people who are... I am made up of a great deal of influences and experiences.

How I filter that and process that ends up coming out through what I do. Some people can relate to it, many cannot and many despise what I do or don't have any interest in what I do and I understand that—it's expected and understood, and ever anticipated. As far as Dada being the main influence... I mean I would say that some of the tools that they used are very important to me. They basically waged war on art as art. So, take that how you want, but that was a big influence to me.

I'm also heavily influenced by Francis Bacon the painter but not just because of his painting but a lot more because of who he was as a man, about his perspective of the world and humanity.

There isn't a really easy answer, to any of this stuff.

**I like the notion of a war on art—how does that manifest in Integrity's music/ lyrics/artwork?**

I like the idea of challenging the rules of what is expected. I have always felt aggressively at odds with the concept of being categorized within a specific genre or sub-genre. That uncomfortable feeling has led me to push the boundaries even further. Their imposed confinement only acts as a tool to push you to pursue new heights of experimentation and discard the imaginary boundaries. As for the second part of your question: There have always been critics and naysayers insisting that I can not write lyrics about a certain subject or in a certain style. That I dare not make artwork look any other way than the a specific expected way because it is not accepted by the norm . . .that my music must always follow whatever the current fleeting trend may be at that given moment. A war is waged against those who oppress expression. Creativity was always intended to be free. Pushing boundaries always yields reward, conforming to others expectations always leaves me bored.

**Tell me a bit more how you utilize poetry collage in your lyrics - can you provide an example of that in your own work? What about it interests you?**

At this point it has become second nature. The juxtaposition of words that are often unlikely next to one another can create a special feeling. Here is an old example from about 30 years ago: "Hooked lung stolen breath cunt". How do those word in that order make you feel? How does it feel to say those words together outloud? Liberated? Embarrassed? Salacious? Words breed image. Image conjures sound. Sound corrupts perception.

**You've done a lot work with soundscapes and noise—what was your first exposure to noise as an art form, what about it appeals to you?**

At the start of my first album, "Those Who Fear Tomorrow" that was released in 1991, I had the idea to emulate the vicious and volatile sound of WHITEHOUSE. I had a low bass rumbling beneath a spoken word sample of the serial killer, Henry Lee Lucas threatening the world how he and many of his fellow 4P (Process Church) members were set out on a path to destroy the humans. That song would become my first released officially released noise



track. Shortly after that I formed my side project, PSYWARFARE which has been my electronic noise project since. I have always felt that PSYWARFARE aspired to emulate the sound of how someones conservative parent interprets heavy metal or punk music for the first time. That mocking sound that they make with their mouths that sounds like a chainsaw in a washing machine followed by absurd mock lyrics. I wanted to actually deliver to them their imagined nightmare of what our music sounds like and really turn it back against them. Allowing their fears to spawn the music that they hate. I love the freedom that noise affords, and I love that there is no expectation to measure against. It is pure expression without repercussion.

**Have you ever considered doing a compilation of all the Blood Books (Dwid's zine from the early 90s)?**

No, no... I've been offered deals to do that and I turned them down I think that it was something that served its purpose at the time it was mainly just something that would provoke people into giving things a deeper thought-into having a different perspective on things or just irritate people, or all of the above.

I don't feel that it has any value at this day and age. And some of the bands that were put in into it have evolved into people who support politics I don't support and I don't wanna give them a platform off my name. And they were really just like the equivalent of the printed blog or something, a quick thought of that specific moment in time, what was going on around me, people that I was interacting with, and music that I liked at the time... I also got a chance to do some collage and some early attempts

at computer graphics...

**Have you considered doing a book or zine of your artwork?**

I think of the inserts of records like that. The last full album that we did on Relapse came with a booklet and the insert for *The Blackest Curse* that came out on Deathwish was a rather thick insert booklet with images and lyrics... mostly images coresponding to the songs... And maybe with the next one... they'll be more artwork involved maybe a book, I don't know.

Maybe on the other hand if I have too much artwork I'm opening myself up to being bootlegged so that's could be a problem.

**Any closing thoughts?**

You know, I grew up in Indiana on a farm when I was six or seven years old, and I remember walking out into the back area, and looking and seeing corn fields on all the des, and thought that, as to more to the world in this.

So there is this aspect to what I do that I guess, is a pay-it-forward type thing.

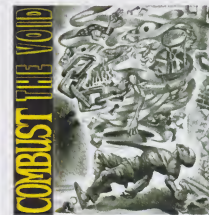
I want to be able to interject a small piece, something small, into what I'm doing, where there is someone... Like out there who's like that, who may not be in a corn field but maybe somewhere else, they're just wanting to flex their creative muscles and nowadays it's not so easy, I think, because things are a little bit too accessible to people and a little bit too convenient, too much hand-holding,

letting people... This is how you do it, and people don't have as much need for hustle, like a... while it's great. And I use it as well, to go to YouTube and figure out how to repair my car or how to do some kind of weird form of printing or whatever it would be that I would be interested in doing. When I was younger I would just have to figure it out by trial and error, it doesn't make it better, but the fact that I'd have to go through those steps that would strengthen my creative muscles and growing up on a farm without the internet, without even cable TV or even VHS tapes weren't even invented at that point, so I would just basically sit there and draw and dream and create my own realities, and entertain myself that way. And I would like to a small degree, to give a little bit of that back to the people who enjoy my records. And I think there are some people who appreciate that aspect of what the records offer at least I hope so.

Sometimes people tell me that they recognize that in the music and in the artwork and the lyrics.

I appreciate that they do, and then there's other people who just say, "Let's have a mosh part. I like to hit my friends." And you can't tell people that's right or wrong, if it's how they wanna interpret things.

I'm not here to set the rules but I like the idea that people can become more... A little bit more from experiencing something like this-or other things, not just what I do.



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# IAN SHELTON

## Regional Justice Center

### Why do you hate photography?

The answer is that I don't hate photography. I love photography. I'm a photographer. I make my living as a film maker. I love cameras. I love documentation. But the point that we've gotten to in the culture is so Instagram centric—it feels very vapid to me and it feels just very hollow. And that is amplified by the amount of documentation. I think documentation is important in moderation for me personally, because if there's too much documentation there's not enough living. And so with this current moment where there's literally six cameras pointed at a band performing or, the part that really bothers me is when they're entangled in the performance.

You shouldn't be able to see a camera on stage. It's not a part of the performance is my personal opinion. And it just bothers me the way that they intersect in a way where, it's as if photographers are audience member plus, or a lot of time it seems that the way that they are viewing themselves. This whole thing started because I was on tour with Drug Church, playing Sound & Fury has always been a weird thing, so many photographers that always show up. And given when RJC plays there, I would notice photographers getting between what I viewed... Me and the audience. They would be inserting themselves in that space in a way that made me aware of them, which I hated cause it made me feel like I was performing for Instagram.

And it took me out of the performance completely. But then when I was on tour with Drug Church at programs, it's like they were 360 degrees surrounded by cameras. Like there was literally four or five behind, six or seven in the front row, two or three on each side. It was 360 degrees, and when I went to sit in the front, I was asked to move by a photographer.

And I was like I'm here to enjoy this. Like I don't care about your Instagram, 'cause that's where all this is ending up. And I don't think that bands care about it in a way that makes it important to be on someone's Instagram.

**I hate the kind of culture of the band is on the stage and they're performing for you. Personally, the ideal show for me is the band and the audience are one, and they're giving each other energy? And so having people on stage, whatever, I don't give a shit about that. Where I think I find commonality with you though, is, when**

**there's 600 photographers sitting around somebody, and it's all you, and there's not that opportunity for the give-and-take.**

Which I do as well, definitely. And I love that space of creating other mediums of it. And we wouldn't have the same level of over documentation if that was what it took to publish a photo. Now with the level of ease that you can just put things into the world, which I think it affects every level of creative expression, like everything is like... You have people picking it up, that wouldn't otherwise just because literally they think that they just have an audience immediately. And so that, all the way through playing in bands, creating music video, creating photos. I guess all that exact same thing of just like... I make zines myself.

At this point I don't feel that I can publish my photozines because I would be made fun of for being a hypocrite, so I'm not going to do it for a long time, probably, but I have so many collections of photos that I would love to be putting out. And I just put them on my Instagram, because they're not like... One, they're not popular because isn't what people wanna see out of me, but two, that's not the space that I feel that I feel that they... I want people to hold it and look at it and see it.

And as far as talking about the stage, in sharing the space with the audience, I think that is a very important thing but I also do think that it's kind of different for a performer, you go to a hardcore show and that's clearly the case, that's everybody's space. There's not a place in that room that friends couldn't go or the audience couldn't go. But you go see a different band and maybe that would be inappropriate, for to have that have that same give and take with the audience.

That's always kind of the way that I view it, is what's the performance that's being curated. Which obviously isn't an also a thing that a lot of bands within DIY aren't thinking about necessarily, but for me, I do these interviews with my brother who's locked up for our records and then I do a special one for our live show as well. And I'm trying to curate as much of an individual experience as I can, that's specific to the performance that you see. When you see us the next time it's gonna be different. I hope.

And so for me, I love the give and take of the energy that we get from the audience, but at the same time I don't necessarily want them like in our space because I feel like my space is already so confined

by the limitations of movement that I have by being behind a drum set.

**Do you think that that attempt to define space and the reclamation of space itself plays into what you view as your art?**

Somewhat. I mean I just think... I think that our art... That the space is specific. I mean the other thing that is... I actually talked about this on my podcast with Patrick just recently, it's kinda funny that you hit me up in the time line that you did, 'cause we were talking about this, like he is more than an engaged participant, but basically what... I mean what the result of the conversation was, was like, you wanna curate an art space to make more money to where you can play a venue where you're able to do that.

Obviously, you can't do that in hardcore—literally every light in the room is on, which is the worst thing for a performance possibly, in my opinion, I hate it.

But I don't know, it's difficult 'cause you want to have a vibe and you want to have... You want people to feel like they're getting an experience and it's really difficult within the live space alone. And then, that's why when you add this other thing of over documentation, while you're performing... And for me, it makes me feel like I'm blocked in, like especially if I feel like a photographer's boxing out the audience members, to where I can't see them and I'm just seeing a camera in my face, that's like I no longer feel the performance. It doesn't feel right to me.

**In thinking about the context of over documentation, there's a line I go back and forth on; in an ideal world shit photographers would stay home, but I also feel that way about bands. There are a lot of bands where it feels like they're not putting in any effort. It's a vacation for them and I'm just funding their road trip. There's a lot of photographers that are like that, too... Just shooting to post online or Instagram or whatever... I mean to me if you're not printing your photos, I don't think you're a photographer.**

**But I also don't wanna be a total gatekeeper. I don't want to shut people out, because there was a point in time when I was in that shit band that probably shouldn't have been on tour. And the same thing goes with photography. When I first started taking**



**pictures, it was with a point shoot when I was 14 years old. Those photos are terrible. I'm glad I don't have them anymore.**

I think that there is a power in... To some degree which I know is a very... Yeah, cause you're supposed to be as accepting and allowing everybody in or whatever, but I think that being told that you suck is powerful. I think that I only got better because I was told my first band was terrible. I only got better because I always had this feeling like when I started doing film making it was like, ah, if only somebody would just give me the money right now, I could create the thing." But guess what, I couldn't, I couldn't create the thing, I wasn't good enough.

And so literally the whole idea of aspiration is to get through the next gate, and so without gate keeping what is it, what is the process? If someone tells you you're good right when you start, are you gonna get better? I don't think so.

**There's the opportunity to suck and to be told that you suck. You know what I mean?**

I just think that... Which is something that... I think the point that people... Which I think you may be getting at right now is how are supposed to... How are people supposed to get better if you don't give them a chance to practice? But at the same time at what... How do I owe someone to be their guinea pig? Why is my performance the sacrificial lamb to their shitty photography? So it's just like, and what I'm doing is curated, it's as pretentious as it sounds, honestly, but I put all this effort into making our set what it is and trying to create a very specific thing so when people interject in that it's offensive I think. And because they're not thinking about it, they're literally just pointing and shooting, you know? Whereas like... Which is another conversation of the degree of which different art forms take. Photography is an instant art form in the documentation aspect. You have all your years of crafting your eye and everything leading up to that moment, but in that moment you're pointing and shooting. 'Cause it's you know what you like. Whereas a performance is something that someone has to drive eight hours for and whatever, all the crafting that goes into it, even if it is a shitty performance from a band that isn't curated or whatever, it still is... There's just different degrees of effort put into various forms of art, and so it is difficult to... When one can supersede the other, is obviously a delicate conversation that people don't really wanna have.

**Do you think that because of how deeply personal Regional Justice Center is to you, that it elevates that passion around performance?**

I mean, I don't think that specifically elevates the... I think my passion for art just ultimately is what is propelling this idea. It does upset me when a performance is over because I'm not in it... It's so weird, we've kinda talked about it as a band a lot, but I'm not having fun while we're playing, I don't understand what I enjoy so much about this. It's almost more that I have to do it for some specific reason, but I'm actually angry. It's not emotionally... It's there's so much frustration that goes into it as far as, feeling like everything's constantly going wrong, feeling like everything sounds bad, feeling like

there's all these weird things and then being fueled by the adrenaline of playing drums and exerting myself so hard is like... I'm actually agro in those moments in a way that I can't control.

And so, when something steps on it or interferes it really sets me off because I'm already in my head, it's just everything is going wrong already. 'Cause everything sounds bad, everything's, whatever and then my adrenaline's just pumping. So I think more so, it's just my passion for art in general, which I know is so fucking corny to say about hardcore 'cause I think people are anti-art at this point, because they... It's that overload constantly that makes things non-artistic and because people who are not serious about art, are just as capable of putting out what could be art to somebody else. And so now we have this new generation of people that I think don't take it very serious, don't respect it, don't think about it.

**The reason why I got involved with punk in the first place is because I felt like I had to, this is the only thing that's ever made sense to me. I think this shit is important. I view this in the same context as... if you read interviews with Dez or Dukowski from Black Flag, it's because they had to. There's just something that drives you and it's the only way you can feel sane in some ways.**

Yeah. Yeah, I definitely don't know what else I would be doing. The good contrast is this whole thing as a project my brother and I got into hardcore and he got into drugs. We had the same upbringing and we just have found our different paths in those two things that we were, for lack of a better word, passionate or compulsive about.

I will kill myself if I have to work a normal job personally, 'cause I just... I can't turn it off. And so, I just want to make money the best way I can, as far as making it survivable, I was a truck driver. I was a screen printer, I was a house painter. I tried so many things, but all I did every day, was I could hear songs in my head. I was writing stories in my head all day. I couldn't turn it off, and my inability to act upon those things was making me miserable. And so I just found a way to make my life work in a way that I can just create things constantly instead. It was that, "Now I have to create things I don't wanna make." That's the new reality. There's some times I have to do creative things that I find creatively soul crushing. But at the same time, it's better for me, because it gives me the leniency to create what I need to create. And yeah. I'm so lucky that somehow this magic combo landed that I got into hard core first. And that gave me the DIY mentality to figure out how to make the things I wanted to make and try to create the path that I want.

**With this being this intensely personal project around your brother's incarceration and the very real feelings that are expressed in it—do you feel like it actually translates to a lot of people?**

No, not at all. Almost in no way at all. People decrease us to being an anti-cop band. That's what people view us as, I would say that's what most people view us as. There's not a single anti-cop lyric or sentiment expressed, besides the fact that there's these symbolic representations of cops that are used to illustrate a point, like the cover of *World Of Inconvenience*, that cover, Mark made that to

show the way that cops are used to be a part of a burnt out system. So the smoke is coming from within him and he is a part of the burnt out system. Same thing with the liquid on our second record. It's meant to be this unifying force of like, this cop is liquid and the people behind bars are liquid. And it's all to symbolize, we all are used to serve this greater system. Whereas that turns into the anti-cop band. Again, not a single lyric. People are like, "That's the prison reform band". I've never talked about prison reform.

People know that that we have this loose affiliation to prison politics in some sort of way and it's not about these things. So I know 100% that none of it is landing with people. As far as like there are people that do get it, but as far as the general public, I get asked all the time, "Where do you get those sound clips from?" Not everyone's reading the interviews and the press pieces, and blah, blah, blah. And I don't expect them to. It's not gonna change the art that I make. I think it's only gonna get more complicated with this next record 'cause I'm actually gonna bring my mother into the fold, in talking about the way that she fucked us up—interviewing her on the next record and use that to overlap with my brother and I splitting the lyric writing for the record in half, and sharing teams between the two of us. And I can tell you, most people are not gonna understand it. They're not gonna read the lyrics, for one, but it's not gonna change that I'm gonna do it.

It gets frustrating to see my art be reduced to something it's not about just because it's not about... It's not even a misinterpretation, it's just the literal surface level glare that something that they think is close, it's not like they're reading the lyrics and then saying, "This is the anti cop band," because if you could read our lyrics and get that, more power to you. I guess you really went in wanting to think that.

But if they're not reading the lyrics, they're not understanding anything about it 'cause they're not actually partaking in the art. So I guess I'm frustrated in that, but otherwise I don't care about explaining things, I don't care about anything. I didn't care about... I wanted to be fucking interviewed about the photographer thing a long time ago, 'cause honestly, I just wanted to get on with it. I didn't wanna talk about it ever again because it's not that interesting to me.

It's only interesting to me when I can come up with the most clever joke I can. And in that I had two ways of talking about it, where I was unintelligible rude or I was clever. Those are the two routes that I wanted to take because I wanted to be offensive, 'cause I wanted to say things that would be purposefully riling that you couldn't misinterpret. They're so blunt and stupid that you could not misinterpret it. And so with all that at the same time I wanted to be explaining it, but I also was fine not explaining it. I was like, "Think whatever you want."

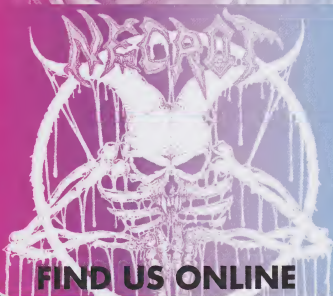
Or think that I care about art. That's true, you can think that or you can, whatever. You can think I'm just trying to get publicity for my band. There's a combination of all three that... That is the truth, but... at the end of the day, I didn't care what people actually thought about it. And it's the same through all levels of creation for me, so.

Ultimately, I'd say fuck 'em...



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# MARK MCCOY

**How did you get into punk/hardcore? For you was it music first or art?**

I got into hardcore through skateboarding in junior high. When I bought my first issue of Thrasher in the summer of '88, I discovered how closely connected skateboarding was to punk and hardcore. I signed up for a Thrasher subscription and started reading Pushead's music column, "Pus-Zone," every month. There was only one local punk band in my town that I loved—called Eerwax Factory—but the mall near me had a music store with a "Hardcore" section and, whenever I could scrape together ten bucks, I'd take a gamble on a tape that I thought looked cool. I made a ton of missteps. For instance, I got burned on GBH and The Exploited—I thought they were just awful bands. What they were singing about—anarchy and Thatcher and their whole leather-and-spikes look—was all so alien to me. But my world turned upside down when I heard Minor Threat—it was the first time I was exposed to anything that intense with lyrics so relatable, just normal stuff about the pressures of being young and having to deal with life.

**You and I first met thanks to you organizing a show for my overly earnest band xINEPTx at Chicago's A-Space 20 plus years ago—what is it about hardcore/punk that still appeals to you? Is there still validity, in your opinion, to what is now a close 40 year old art form? If so, what?**

While I can't speak to the validity of punk today, I love creating something new—just starting with an idea and seeing it through to the end until I have a finished record in my hands.

I always have several unfinished projects that I bounce between, as each inches toward completion. These can take years. Currently, I'm playing in seven bands. I do this without concern for anything else besides making an awesome record.

Over the years, I've fallen into a background position which I actually prefer over playing shows and being public. I typically handle everything from overseeing production, helping bands with lyrics or songwriting, making record artwork or whatever. I'm lucky that I get to contribute to so much important music.

**Is there a purposeful consistency to Youth Attack as a record label? Do you view it more as an art project or a means to release music for people beat each other up to, break shit, etc? Is it both?**

I only want to release the best stuff. Over time, my criteria for what I find exciting or even interesting

keeps narrowing. Fortunately, I get to work with great people that I think are the best in the game. I don't categorize what I'm doing beyond the feeling it gives me, which is some sense of being alive. Beyond that, how people interact with the music is their business. I will say that the label serves as a pressure valve for the fake, bullshit world we're all forced to tolerate. More than that though, I think we are building something of substance that contributes to the legacy of art, and, in my view, makes life better.

**Why is it important for your label to have a defined aesthetic? The label was started as a means to put out the Charles Bronson discography but unless I'm missing something the releases that follow look completely different—was that on purpose or just the way it worked out?**

Aesthetics matter because we have entered into an ultra-codified unreality and, from an artistic standpoint, we need principles to direct our lives back toward beauty. It's a confusing, chaotic time, and without aesthetics we lose our semblance of order and intentionality. I believe this insanity has already occurred in the mainstream, which is why everything sucks now. The path forward must be left to true artists—those that the current establishment can gain nothing from—to lead the way.

In my own experience, having been around for some time, I make what I make in response to what's happening within or around me, which evolves. That said, I have certain tastes and habits that manifest and maybe they are what has actually allowed me to continue making work. Maintaining a sense of style is crucial, and I mean this in both a visual and audial sense, as they are two sides of the same coin.

Punk and the art world are both so youth driven—what or who motivates you to keep creating in the face of that? Do you feel like you are just gripping onto the ghost of youth?

I don't think about these kinds of questions because I've always tried to remain true to myself and not worry about how I'm perceived.

**Do you make a conscious separation between how you approach your more commercial work (book covers for example) and your other work—or is it a matter of 'this is what I do, you either like it or not.' If there is a separation, how do you balance that—what are the main differences?**

I don't consciously separate approaches. Instead, I just think about the best way to make something. Whether it's using a certain technique or choosing

particular subject matter, these decisions should be in service to the final product. Instead of insisting that a work look like something I've made, I'd rather the thing I make stand out on its own.

**How do you feel about Felix Von Havoc going back to just being called Krishna and hawking table saws? If you could get paid to endorse a product what would it be and why?**

Good for Felix, I think he's a genuine guy. If I had to endorse a product, it would be era-cancelling headphones that block out the modern world and pipe in everyday sounds from past decades or even from the future. We would have better music, louder appliances, and cooler slang. The nostalgic old sounds produced would actually serve as an incentive to overcome this era, which is terrible. Of course when I say 'terrible,' I mean this with total optimism—better times are coming. This will take some patience, so we will need the headphones.

**How would you describe your art these days—I was looking at the recent work for Regional Justice Center and Full of Hell, did you create the art to reflect the music/band or was it more like Pettibon where he's just like 'there's a bunch of shit on the floor, just grab something that looks cool'? If the former, what is that process like for you?**

I consider myself a hyperrealist. In my drawings and graphic work, I'm creating visual narratives that attempt to ask questions about the nature of reality. Trying to answer these questions would be lame and I think this constitutes what many term "political art." To me, "political art" is an oxymoron, as art and politics are diametrically opposed. They might inform each other to some extent, but they cannot occur simultaneously or you just have propaganda. In fact, the role of art is not subjective, but it requires having the correct worldview. Art's true purpose is to fill us with awe, the appreciation of which requires exiting time and entering a boundless internal headspace. Art doesn't fill in the blanks and tell us what to think, instead it inspires us by opening up new worlds we never knew existed.

Now whether or not I achieve this in my own work, I can't say. Everything I make is crafted through trial and error. Even when something is finished, I can only say "I think it's done," but even then I'm not sure what to make of it. And this is because the end product itself is less interesting than the process of making it.

The process itself is merely pushing my imagination by trying new things and seeing what works. All of



it is based on feeling and I can spend days chiseling away only to end up with nothing. Usually though, something will come together but it's from an intuition that I can't really explain.

**What influence do movies have on your artwork? Is there a specific era, director, etc that appeals to you the most?**

I watch a lot of movies, but there is no direct correlation to what I make, other than that for a while I've been creating greyscale record art for bands like Full of Hell and Regional Justice Center and refer to the individual frames as "film stills." I'm mostly into Italian genre films from the classic era.

**What is your current favorite piece of art you've created and why? What artwork do you feel is most representative of what you do and why?**

I honestly don't know. Once I make something I don't think about it much afterwards. I'll just make something to make the next thing, and, hopefully, do it better.

**You've been a New Yorker forever—do you miss the Midwest/Chicago?**

Yes, but I would only go back to Illinois if I could live in John Hughes' fictional town of Shermer, as depicted in his movies—a place where everything is fun and the neighborhoods are nice and friends hang out and do hilarious stuff. I hate New York City. It is a deeply cynical, destructive place. Don't ever move here.

**What are you listening to these days?**

I mostly just listen to my own projects or the bands that I'm releasing. Often this just means listening to mixes and thinking about production issues. That said, what I release is what I'm into. I just don't have the time or interest to pay much attention to other stuff, as it would only take away from the little world we've created for ourselves.

**Do you ever find it weird that people refer to you as the singer of a power-violence band? I mean I never saw you in Ben Davis' and as far as I know you've never smoked meth or volcanic amounts of weed.**

Oh I don't know, do they? Charles Bronson only called ourselves 'power-violence' as a joke. In our minds we just played hardcore. The west coast lifestyle was obviously not our thing. We were too wholesome, too midwestern. I used to talk on the phone with Chris Elder from Despise You, a great guy. He would tell me crazy stories, like about finding corpses in abandoned buildings as a kid. That to me, is Power-Violence.

**Have you ever considered going to Mean Steve's tanning salon or Chubby Fresh's meatball sub stand at the Feast of the Assumption festival in Cleveland to make sure they are doing ok?**

Is this your invite for a road trip?!

**I worry about them... anyway, Deadbodiesthroughout or Agents of Satan?**

Agents of Satan—an amazing band. I got to see them at Fiesta Grande in 1996 and their performance was insane. The stage banter alone, where they threatened the bouncers and club owners at Gilman, had us in tears. The members even fought with each other on stage. It was so good.

**Faith or Void and why?**

Oh come on, Void is the best of the best. Everyone knows why.

**Bands or the bouncers and why?**

Neither. Just stay home and make something.

**Any closing thoughts?**

As the great xINEPTx once said, self-destruction is not rebellion.

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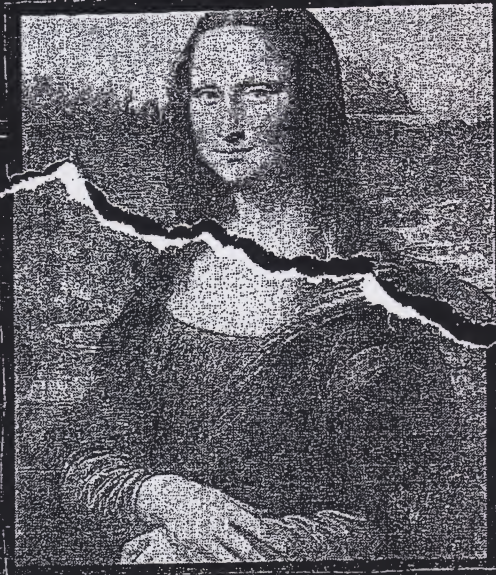


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# SOUNDS.

## ΦΑΛΚΟΝΕΡΑ – S/T EP

And now for something a little different—key-board-driven punk rock from Greece. Not really '60s garage influenced, it's much too aggressive and played at too quick a clip for that sorta thing. In some ways, it reminds me a bit of the stuff that swirled around San Francisco in the late '90s early '00s—like they don't sound like the SUBTONIX but you could definitely see them sharing the same stage. Dancy, catchy and super fun—though from the cover I was expecting heavy crust.

## ADDERALL - VS Big Pharma EP

Jangly, angly guitars backed up to reverb-soaked snarling and unintelligible (in a good way) vocals—it creates an overarching creepy vibe that I really enjoy. The lo-fi production hints at mid '90s Rip-Off Records vibe, but only if that shit wasn't a bunch of dudes dressed like they were extras in the Brady Bunch. The guitar work at times reminds me of East Bay Ray's spookier work—if the DEAD KENNEDYS were fronted by the guy from UNITED MUTATION, but on acid. Well, more acid.

## ANDROID - Chapter 001 EP

Noisey, chaotic hardcore punk from Orlando, Florida—I could do with out the nearly two minute long *Confusion Is Sex*-esque soundscape which serves an intro, they launch into a clamorous full charge attack of burly hardcore punk. Its so killer to hear more beautifully raw blasts arising out of the sunshine state—you like PROTOCOL or ARMOR? You'll dig this.

## THE ANNIHILATED – Demo CS

Ugly music for ugly people—simple, barebones and pissed as fuck hardcore for people who think the NEGATIVE APPROACH LP is a little too metal. No d-beat, no metal just six detonations of throat punching fury straight out of London. Perfect in every way.

## ANTAGONIZE – Slip Death LP

I don't know exactly what it is, but there's so much about this that reminds me of Seattle's UNDERTOW (that's a good thing). I'm really feeling the vocals on this—especially when paired with the monstrous guitar attack and drums that punch along at a rapid clip until crashing into breakdown's that certain to inspire a legion of clean-cut hawdkaw dudes to start two-stepping like they're in a line-dancing competition at Bob's Country Bunker. Sure, there are a lot of clichés on this record, but hardcore is filled with clichés, and when motherfuckers do it right, it's more than worth it.

## ANTIMOB – II LP

One of the best things about writing about all these records for this issue is hearing bands like this for the first time. Hailing from Athens, Greece, ANTIMOB play an absolutely brilliant, intense, melodic version of hardcore punk with energy just cranked to one million. From minute one, my jaw was on the floor. Think a better produced ADRENALIN OD or early RKL—this just cooks.

## ANTIMOB – 2019 EP

Two more brilliant tracks from this Greek band continuing in the same vein as their recent LP—they are more than worth your time, so by all means, sit up and take notice.

## APOCALYPSE TRIBE - Ai Mageddon LP

Straight-forward hardcore punk with a slight cross-over edge a la IRON REAGAN or *Technocracy*-era COC complete with lyrics about a dystopian future straight out of a Phillip K Dick book. Did I mention this is Karl from EARTH CRISIS' project? To them that know me, it shouldn't come as a surprise that I prefer this to the stomping slow jams of Syracuse's finest tofu eaters, but what surprised me is just how much I enjoyed this.

## ARMOR - Some Kind of War EP

Primitive hardcore punk from Tallahassee, FL—straightforward, primal and to the fucking point. No fucking around—just ripping discharges of ear-splattering, face stomping destruction. For the babies, think BOSTON STRANGLER, for the geriatrics think NEGATIVE FX.

## AXERASH - S/T LP

Rapid-fire hardcore from Sweden—it's a vicious and blister-inducing journey through eleven tracks which just cook. Twisting, turning riffs that give off a feeling like watching Steve McQueen tear through San Francisco in *Bullitt*, pausing occasionally to catch its breath then it's back to the races. Less classically Swedish and more American sounding, I'm still kicking myself for getting sick and missing out on their recent US tour. Top shelf stuff.

## BATO – Ravages of Time EP

Excellent, full-speed-ahead hardcore from Virginia Beach—great hook-driven riffs and enough rocking breakdowns to allow you to take a break from all the thrashing now and then. This reminds me a lot of DEAD NATION. Great debut EP.

## BATTLE ROYALE - Way Of The Derelict LP

Eighteen fast and catchy songs in around twenty-six minutes—its pretty solid meat and potatoes American hardcore punk through a slight UK82 filter. Put another way, this reminds me a lot of the sorta stuff Punk-core (A GLOBAL THREAT, VIRUS, etc) and Hellcat (UNION 13, F-MINUS) were putting out in the early to mid-00s.

## BATTLE RUINS - IV.XII.MMXIX CS

Epic beyond epic street punk. By now you should be familiar with this band, and I highly recommend you Google their song "Glorious Dead Lay Under Waves," down a pint of navy proof rum and light your face on fire while vanquishing your foes. This band takes the best, most gloriously cartoonish aspects of Oi and MANOWAR (seriously), honing them into this impossibly perfect band. At time I can't even fathom how they are able to write such perfect hooks, and the melody lines... the only US band that can threaten THE TEMPLARS to their right to the Crown of Joe Hawkins. Epic beyond epic—I can't even deal with how insanely good the song "Hell's Raiders" is—you can just see the oncoming onslaught, sabers glinting in the morning sun...

## BERNICHE - 4 Canciones De Mierda EP

Beyond inept, lo-fi punk rock from Spain. This feels a lot like something you'd find on a comp tape you'd order from Kill Rock Stars in the early 90s or a mix tape your BEAT HAPPENING and DANIEL JOHNSTON obsessed friend would make you. The first two tracks give off a bit of a VULPESS vibe, but the other two more indie-rockers I could probably do without.

## BETTER REALITY - I Like Punk Life EP

The counter argument to PHYSIQUE's assertion that "Punk Life is Shit," perhaps? I'd bet they'd all get along despite this difference—for their part, BETTER REALITY cranks out six tracks of beautifully inept hardcore that hints at a taste for CHAOS UK and DISORDER. You can almost taste the cider and smell the faint odor of bags soaked in solvents, ready for a quality night of chaos.

## BIG CHEESE – Punishment Park LP

While I feel like their LP on Painkiller (*Don't Forget To Tell The World*) had more of BREAKDOWN vibe, I'm seeing hella CRO-MAGS worship going on here and I ain't mad at it. From the riffs to the vocalizations to the drumming—its like Bloodclot, Harley, Mackie and Paris had a love child. I'm not talking post *Age of Quarrel* CRO-MAGS, and I might just be talking demo era because this is got that same flouncing strut



that's present on the '84 demo courtesy of its rawer recording.

### **BLEAKNESS – Functionally Extinct LP**

Moody and heavy darkwave from France—there is a heavy KILLING JOKE vibe here, but more punk. It's a powerful, driving, beautifully morose record blending goth and punk—there's an intense feeling of yearning in the vocal delivery which makes this even more effective.

### **BLIND EYE – S/T CS**

Seven tracks of rough and tumble punk rock from the UK—musically it reminds a lot of late 90s Oakland punx BLACK FORK in how it proceeds in a quick but rock inflected clip guaranteed to induce a packed house show into a sweaty, raucous mess. I'm definitely into this.

### **BLOOD TRACE – S/T CS**

More quality hardcore punk from Greece—raspy throatied vocals over quick-paced jams reminding me a smidge of early VARUKERS. A good first effort—hope we see more!

### **BLUEPRINT - Here to Please CS**

There's something about this band from the city of brotherly hate which reminds me a bit of early SLAPSHOT in a bubble bath with VOORHEES. Solid boots'n'braces aggro through an American hardcore filter, with a guitar player who has a whammy bar providing a solid foundation for a vocalist's bark that hints at the early efforts of Mr. Kelly, albeit a little snottier. Good stuff.

### **BODY FARM - S/T EP**

Seven track EP of quick paced bordering on power-violence style hardcore from Central Ohio. Reverb soaked female vocals lashing out against sexual violence, sexism and more—a great debut and one where it comes with a lyric sheet for a reason.

### **BOMBARDEMENT – S/T LP**

Mid-paced, d-beat fueled, DISCHARGE inspired French hardcore. Meat and potatoes, stick to your ribs, (insert other idiom here) hardcore in one of the most classic styles. This is incredibly well executed and I'm certain that if I saw them live I'd be raving about how good they are, but not a lot of new ground is broken here—which begs the question, does one really want much deviation from the form in this style?

### **BRANDY - Clown Pain EP**

A scuzzy sonic drag of reverb-soaked garage punk. A bit of early JESUS & MARY CHAIN mixed with THE HUNCHES—lotsa distortion and drugs. It's an interesting taste of this band for sure—if you are a fan of the stuff In The Red releases this is one to watch.

### **BRUX – Anti-You CS**

Brutish Catalan Oi—despite the rather thin production this comes off incredibly tough a la those early BRUISERS EPs. You know the drill—songs about fighting, general lawlessness, drinking, etc. It's great.

### **CANDY – Super-Stare EP**

There is so much about CANDY that reminds me of *Humanity is the Devil* & *Systems Overload* era INTEGRITY—it's heavy, metallic hardcore with a foot planted in punk, but another in a five-gallon drum of LSD. Don't like INTEGRITY? Maybe you enjoy Japanese jams like SOCIETIC DEATH SLAUGHTER? Just a crushing cacophony of heavy riffs, swirling solos, blasting drums—it's a beautiful aural assault. A great taste of what is to come from this band.

### **CELDA – Demo CS**

You know, it's a travesty how punks in the US barely pay attention to what goes in their neighbors to the South. I'm including myself in this judgment—we end up missing so many great bands and potential friends! CELDA is from Mexico City and play a style of aggressive hardcore punk that would fit in well with a lot of the modern Los Angeles bands—TOZ-COS, BLAZING EYE, FUGA, etc. It's got a raw and noisy edge that just barely hides their catchy riffs and solid breakdowns.

### **CEMENT SHOES - Too LP**

Demented and twisted hardcore punk that loves BLACK FLAG as much as the ALICE COOPER BAND. A snotty, manic, acid-soaked vision of your punk rock future—one-part noodling psych and one-part background music for fist magnet convention. Unsettled, beautiful weirdo jams and I love it.

### **CESSPOOL – We Hide Among You EP**

Oh København, so much to answer for... straight-forward, high energy hardcore P-U-N-K. This ain't no FRITES MODERN and it's too POISON IDEA-by-way-of-MÖTÖRHEAD to fit in with that early '00s Kick'n'Punch style—there's a delightful beefy muscularity to this which makes me think they'd fit in with the vibe of RIVAL MOB or DEAD STOP, even if they don't sound exactly like them. Great debut, now do more...

### **CHAIN CULT - Shallow Grave LP**

Oh the kids and their chorus pedals... when I was 12-years old, there was a goth girl named Kim who I rode the bus to school with, she smelled of clove ciggies and CHRISTIAN DEATH albums. She was the first person to play me BLITZ's *Second Empire Justice* (which I heard BEFORE *Voice of Generation*, imagine my surprise and confusion). Anyway, if I had a time machine and could go back 33 years (oh my god, kill me please) and play this for her, she would LOVE it—bonus, she might have finally thought I was cool and not annoying. I'm still annoying but this record is not—perfectly executed dark wave punk that doesn't drag nor drift too far into annoying new wave tendencies. There is a great melodic sensibility about this while not drifting away from being assertive in its attack—like if there was an alternate universe where NEW MODEL ARMY records weren't overproduced and sonically, bland instead retaining a sense of rawness which adding to their urgency.

### **CHAINED BLISS - Stained Red Promo CS**

This is outstanding dark garage punk that echoes of Portland heroes OBSERVERS. It is tuneful diving punk rock that maintains a moody edge with guitar work—at times hinting at the styling of THE WIPERS' Greg Sage. This is a really cool thing to stumble across.

### **CHOICE TO MAKE - Vicious Existence EP**

Modern production aside, this sounds like an outtake from the *New Breed* tape comp NYHC legends Freddy Alva & Chaka put together—its still got speed but spends more time grooving than thrashing. There's a lot about this that indicates they've spent a lot of time listening to OUTBURST, or bands that spent some quality time with OUTBURST and there's nothing wrong with that.

### **CHUBBY & THE GANG - All Along The Uxbridge Road EP**

A pleasant, infectious English pub rocker—you can almost see a bunch of pissed up geezers looking like late '60s, skinhead era SLADE impersonators spilling pints of Guinness and doing some sort of moonstomping dance of death in celebration of their local football club clenching defeat from the jaws of victory (or maybe it's the other way 'round). Totally killer release.

### **CHUBBY & THE GANG - Speed Kills LP**

Absolutely brilliant—probably one of the most exciting things I've heard in ages. There's so much of this that reminds me of those late 70s UK punk bands like RIFF RAFF or the KILLJOYS—tons of snot, energy, sass and melodies that I could see leading to raucous, beer soaked evening of smashing up the club. Brilliant.

### **CHROME SKULLS - Metal Skull EP**

There is something here that makes me think of THE ABUSED—its not as desperate or unhinged and certainly pays more homage to the throne of d-beat than the legends of the A7, but still... something about the vocal delivery and the production maybe? Thick d-beat hardcore attack.

### **COCHONNE – S/T CS**

Jangly, angular lo-fi punk rock that hints at many nights flipping KLEENAX and ERASE ERRATA records while plotting burning the banks and smashing patriarchy.

### **COGOTAZO – Demo CS**

Do you remember the first time you heard *City Baby Attacked by Rats*? No, this doesn't sound exactly like GBH, but man you can just feel Colin's ghost twisting the nobs of inspiration all over these Spaniard's brains—I know Colin isn't dead but just go with it. Anyway, a heavy UK82, studs-and-spikes influence permeates. It's punchy, tuneful, and really assertive in its attack—great early hint of what may come.

### **COMMANDO - Les Genoux Écorchés LP**

More great French punk done up in the classic style—catchy songs with plenty of oompf backing up an urgent vocal approach. A bit garagey with a hint of oi in its approach—this simmers in your eardrums and infects them with mountains of hooks—a great listen.

### **COMMON WAR – Speak of the Devil 12"**

Stomping, dissonant, metallic hardcore out of Southern California—it's heavy yet moody with restive pauses that go on just long enough for you to catch your breathe before it comes pounding through your



ear drums again. Younger folk who are fans of **sa CULT LEADER** would probably find something here to enjoy—the same could be said for gray hairs who find comfort in their worn copy of **CAVE IN's** *Until Your Heart Stops*.

## **COMPANIES OF REJECTED UNION – S/T CS**

Mid-paced, dissonant, and morose - albeit melodic - punk tinged with a slight darkwave ambience overlaying the whole distortion-soaked experience from these Malaysian rockers. This is certainly a grower of a release—early takes were sorta 'uh ok', but multiple spins unveil that there are a lot of interesting hooks and other bits going on here.

## **CRONANDER – Trapped LP**

Sometimes I'm truly baffled about certain releases that just slip through the cracks a bit—like this record. Hailing from the Bay Area (I think Oakland but not 100%), **CRONANDER** play a melodious and tuneful version of hardcore filled with complicated riffing that owes a bit to the brain of Rikk Agnew (think **DI**, think **ADOLESCENTS**, think *All By Myself*). Gruff yet snotty vocals lashing out at consumerism, Trumpism, and government surveillance. Get into it.

## **CRUSTY – Las Grabaciones De Pablo Rata CS**

Primitive, chainsaw hardcore from Spain—it is slightly inept in the best way possible. Think **HHH** meets **WRETCHED** meets **EU'S ARSE**—a classic, intense and urgent approach, despite sounding a little like it was recorded on a boom box. I love this sorta noise-not-music approach, though there is a definite sense of song structure here that makes you sit up and take notice.

## **DARK THOUGHTS – Do You Dream EP**

I'm such a sucker for unashamed pop that is clearly punk, and this fits the bill perfectly. This is unbelievably good—remember when Ben Weasel wasn't a total douche, but instead was a snarky dude that wrote impeccably crafted, melody-soaked hits inspired by all the same stuff the **RAMONES** ate up? This is that—but modern and better! I just want to play this over and over at maximum volume. Outstanding.

## **DARK THOUGHTS – Must Be Nice LP**

Is **DARK THOUGHTS** the best punk band in America? Probably. Not like punk like studs-n-spikes or pogo 'til you puke but like **P-U-N-K**, r-r-r-rightah! Look, do you like the **RAMONES** first four records? Do you like the **MARKED MEN**? Were you there when Paddy from **DILLINGER FOUR** shoved something up his ass? Do you like sweating with your friends in a packed basement/warehouse/living room while some band croons about love lost, anger, misery, and joy all in the same song? That's **P-U-N-K**. Look, at the end of the day we're all trying to our best to mimic what **SISTER ROSETTA THARPE** already did better than all of us but... god damn is this is close... a perfect record.

## **DEATH RIDGE BOYS – (Don't Let Them) Divide Us EP**

Two more blasts of powerful street punk from these Portland punx—the A-side is more of a mid-paced **SHAM** 69-style stomper while the flip cranks up the

pace for their paean to the working class. Like all their releases, I love it.

## **DEATH RIDGE BOYS – Fooled Again EP**

Fist-pumping, put-the-boot-in, decidedly left-wing street punk that harkens more to the sounds of **ANGELIC UPSTARTS** in a blender with **THE BRUISERS** than a band with former members of **TALK IS POISON**, **PRESSING ON** and **TRAGEDY** would lead you to believe. Then again, if you liked **CRIMINAL DAMAGE**, this would probably tickle your booty.

## **DÈCHE – Le Luxure En Vain LP**

Excellent, snotty, sloppy pogo til you puke style punk rock from the city that birthed it, Cleveland. Its fast without being frantic, sloppy without being a carcass—it's a terrifically fun record. Female vocals in French from the city where the Twinkie juice still flows throw pipes in a bookstore. Oh, and for the fanboys, yes that's **Wedge** from **NINE SHOCKS** **TERROR/H100s/INMATES** on the drums.

## **DEFORMATION – S/T LP**

Don't get me wrong, I love me some d-beat. I love the thought of a sea of studded and charged black leather clad miscreants casting forth fists in the air and raging against the system, etc. The problem I have is that so often people half-ass it, rather than taking the simplistic off-kilter drumming style the **BUZZCOCKS** (ahem) developed and injecting it with a sense of urgency and passion. It's become just a plodding, boring formula and I find myself staring into my mezcal just wondering where it all went wrong. Copenhagen's **DEFORMATION** suffer not from this fate—everything is done right on this record. Blazing riffs, vocals splattered about with a sense of urgency, and drumming that just hammers home the point—all glazed in a vital ooze of distortion.

## **DENNIS – The Enthusiast LP**

Listening to this is like listening to an alternate reality where Darby Crash didn't die but instead stepped into a time machine, ending up in 2019. Its sloppy, snot soaked punk rock that really, really sounds like the **GERMS** reborn. I'll take it.

## **DIVISION OF MIND – S/T LP**

Dense metallic and sludgy hardcore with the occasional blasts of speed to mix it up—there's something here which reminds me of **INTEGRITY's** *Seasons In The Size Of Days* in the interplay of weird sonic experimentation and the thuggish soundtrack of some dude just beating the shit out of you in the pit. Put another way, you might think of the chugging outro of their song "Derealize" as just another metronomic means to getting your nose broken but then, when you consider the awkward, molasses soaked pace it proceeds at it almost hints at **GODFLESH** screaming something about breeding like rats... get it? I'm not gonna lie and say I don't wish it were faster, I wish everything was faster, but there's some really interesting things going on here which bodes well for their future...

## **DOCTRINA – Alimentar Su Final LP**

Melodic punk rock from Spain that reminds me bit of Finland's **MANIFESTO JUKEBOX**. It's catchy, energetic and quick-paced, with an emphasis on injecting a bit of melancholy into their pop sensibilities. A lot of

cool guitar work that helps to drive the point home.

## **DROPDEAD – Demo 2019**

**DROPDEAD** has existed for **THIRTY FUCKING YEARS**. Just take that in for a moment—no slowing down, still remaining vital, still staying true to what they've always been despite fucking assholes still not getting it. This is just a taste of their new LP, which should probably be out early next year, and it remains just as powerful—raw, blasts of angry punk that transitions from gnarly 200mph maelstroms to more midtempo riffing and back again.

## **DUPLO – Dor Dor Dor, BB. EP**

Darkwave? Post-punk? Dance goth? I dunno what the kids call it these days. I do know it's really good—it's unsettled and spooky sounding and definitely brings to mind the vision of a room filled with black-clad vampires grooving. There is an *Only Theatre of Pain* feel to this, though it is infinitely more danceable. Fans of **BLU ANXXIETY**, **CRUZ DE NAVAS** or the Spanish band **SECT** should take note.

## **EDUCATION – Culture LP**

Spooky and raw post-punk from Italy. It's interesting to see this style pop up and flourish over the last few years—somehow managing to retain an aggressive and demonstrably punk edge unlike their '80s forbearers. Maybe it is all in the production? It certainly adds power to the presentation. This reminds me a lot of **FALSE FIGURE** or **THE WRAITH**—powerful deathrock/darkwave which succeeds where so many before have failed.

## **ELECTRIC CHAIR – Performative Justice EP**

Frantic hardcore punk in the classic American style—no frills, some thrills, but really just a healthy serving of fury. The recording is remarkably clean without being polished. Not as fast or crazy as **KORO**, but that's the form they're borrowing heavily from, and there ain't nothing wrong with that.

## **EULOGY – Not The One EP**

Crunchy, stomping, mid-tempo SoCal hardcore that reminds me *One Voice*-era **STRIFE** or maybe a little of **BANE**, the earlier years. Super clean production with tons of metallic frills certain to bring forth a bit of ye olde caveman stomp.

## **EXTENDED HELL – Mortal Wound LP**

New York hardcore band that actually plays hardcore, what a novel concept! This rips from start to finish, with buzzsaw guitars, plenty of hooks, breakdowns, raspy vocals, energy through the roof, and fucking riffs for days. This ain't no retro party—sounding totally mature and modern without losing an ounce of intensity. If you like **WARTHOG** or **IMPALERS** and you aren't fucking with this, you are fucking up.

## **FALSE ACT – Extended Memory CS**

Reverb and flange-soaked jams from Poland. This flips between a lo-fi modern darkwave sound a la **ARTIC FLOWERS** to something more akin to the garage inflected spooky punk of the **VANISHING** or **LOST SOUNDS**. There's definitely a bit **JAY REATARD** sprinkled into this, both musically and in the vocal delivery. Certainly one to watch...











## **FINAL - Sentido Común Hegemónico Siglo XXI EP**

Moody and intense music reflecting frustrations surrounding injustices of national borders, corruption, and the general casualties of life in a city surrounded by violence. A slight departure from their prior LP, *Obsolescencia Humana*, as some of the more driving and straight-forward pogo punk influences have been replaced with a feeling of WIPERS-esque melancholy and bitterness—there is still an overarching sense of anger which reveals itself in tracks like "Autoridad." A really great release from these Colombians—hope they can make it to the USA some day.

## **FAIRYTALE - Two-Track Tour Flexi**

I missed FAIRYTALE when they rolled through Richmond and I have to say I regret that mistake because if this flexi is any indicator they were outstanding—rumbley tumbley, noisy, raw-punk of the d-beat varietal with a vocalist that sounds like they transported Amy from NAUSEA straight from 1988. I won't make the mistake of missing them again, that's for sure.

## **FATAL STATE - Estado Fatal LP**

Impassioned, quick paced, and explicitly political hardcore punk from Portland, OR. Intricate music that skips past the current d-beat crust/political punk trend and instead takes influence from a lot of '90s styles—think ANTIPRODUCT, think WITCHHUNT, think KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS. It's fast, dual vocal, intricate hardcore punk that is a refreshing departure from a lot of what comes across my desk these days.

## **FIREWALKER - The Roll Call EP**

Stomping Boston hardcore from one of my favorite cookie monster fronted bands—snarling moshy and filled with aggro. If we're out there looking for comparisons, this is definitely more in the tradition of *Sudden Death Overtime* rather than *Get It Away*, as far as Boston hardcore goes.

## **FLUSH!! - Change With a Shout LP**

High-energy hardcore with a youth crew bent from South Korea—eleven tracks that just blast full-speed-ahead before busting to mosh-inducing breakdowns. A solid ripper of straight edge hardcore.

## **FORESEEN - Infiltrator EP**

Two tracks of rampaging, metallic, crossover thrash from Finland—this is one of those bands that I'm convinced if they were from the US they'd be massive, along the same lines as POWER TRIP because they pack the same sort of wallop.

## **FRECUENCIA DE MUERTE - Death Frequency LP**

Charging, riff-laden hardcore from Portland—Brad Boatright (FROM ASHES RISE, etc) remains a certified guitar hero constructing intricate layers of rock 'n' roll mayhem over a pummeling DISCHARGE-by-way-of-MOTORHEAD assault. There's a bit of this which reminds me of some of the early FORWARD and PAINTBOX records in how it incorporates traditional rock stylings without losing its aggressive punk edge.

## **FUCK IT... I QUIT - The War Ritual LP**

Brutal short blasts of primal hardcore in the most classic sense of the word. I've heard a few people try to paint this as crust but would you call *Victim in Pain* a crust record? HEART ATTACK's *Keep Your Distance* a crust record? This is just pure simple pissed as fuck hardcore with lyrics around animal rights, corporate power and related ills of the world.

## **FUTURE TERROR - S/T LP**

Sizzling, reverb soaked, mid-paced crusty hardcore, ferocious in its howling gut punch delivery. There is an almost robotic syncopation in the delivery that hints at the glory of UK crust lords CRESS, but then kicking into gear for a more straightforward d-beat onslaught. Could FUTURE TERROR in some way be what it would sound like if you played both sides of the CRESS/DOOM 10" at the same time? Maybe—I want more of this, please.

## **FVROREM - Bound by Routine EP**

Seven tracks of Texas hardcore punk with an 80s USHC vibe—sonically its got slight SICK PLEASURE feel to it though I'm not finding any lyrics about doing speed or killing transit employees.

## **GENOGEIST - S/T LP**

Beautifully filthy stenchcore style crust from Portland, OR—cookie monster vocals, heavy, metallic riffs played at mid-tempo pace painting a picture of a ghoulish world straight out of mankind's worst science fiction dreams. Fellow travellers to the likes of SKAVEN, HELKKRUSHER, STORMCROW and the like, I can see them spreading their disease to a throbbing mass of black clad warriors—in the words of the poet, E-40, "Shake them dreads..."

## **GOING AWAY PARTY - Demo CS**

New Wave vs The Truth—the age old battle continues! Tuneful, flange soaked, darkwave punk rock from France with feminine vocals. In many ways this reminds me of THE EPOXIES in a knife fight with KIM WILDE while GITANE DEMONE looks on from her throne.

## **GREY C.E.L.L. - S/T LP**

Am super excited to finally get to hear this—angry discharges of powerful hardcore which pays attention to the importance of hooks and melody while overlaying them snarling, pissed as fuck vocals. Philly's GRAY C.E.L.L. demonstrates that while the kids may have their say, there is something to be said about tempering of age to refine that anger into prime cutting steel. Really great hardcore from a pedigree that includes MONSTER X, CITIZENS ARREST & NEMA.

## **GUNN - Demo CS**

Now this my shit—snotty thrashing hardcore punk that sounds like some sorta missing track from Mystic Record's *Copulation* comp. Just raging OC hardcore free of any metal or rock influences—just lo-fi thrashing which would be a great soundtrack to an afternoon to skateboarding and breaking shit. Fans of LOOSE NUKES should pay attention.

## **HAIRCUT - Sensation EP**

A tasty four-track ripper from Richmond—ferocious

punk rock performed with passion and side of meat 'n' potatoes. Complicated riffing and dynamic drum work backing up vocalizations that alternate between Spanish and English. It is always great to see a phenomenal live band translate that feeling to a recording, and these folk certainly accomplish that—you can just feel the energy creepy crawling out of your headphones. This band should be huge.

## **HAIBUKO - Un Nuevo Poder EP**

Burning Spirits style hardcore through a Mexican punk filter? Its got a rough and tumble, raw recording style to it but the complex, sweeping, melodic riffing and searing leads which pay homage to the likes of DEATH SIDE still shine through.

## **HALSHUG - Drøm LP**

Bands mature and evolve. At one time playing what was more of a straightforward, steamroller of d-beat hardcore in the line of VICTIMS or WOLFPACK, on their latest LP Denmark's HALSHUG slow down a little bit, adding a slight KILLING JOKE feel to some of their tracks, creating a sense of ominous dread to their approach. Still plenty of punchy angst, though, and thankfully this doesn't get wrapped up in a lot of navel gazing dour nonsense.

## **HAMMERED HULLS - S/T EP**

Part of me wants to ignore the pedigree of this band, but when Alec Mackaye's vocals kick in, it's hard to do so—IGNITION was a such an important band to me as a baby punk, and FAITH would have been the kings of hardCore if VOID had never been born. So, let's do this—yes this has people from a bunch of bands you've heard of (TED LEO & THE PHARMACISTS, MAKE UP, WILD FLAG, etc.) and might love, but even if it didn't and you don't, it'd still be good. Melodic, revolution-summer inspired punk rock from the place that formed it—the title track would fit snugly somewhere on *The Orfying Mysticle Of...* while the other two tracks feel a little like missing FAITH demos.

## **HEAVY DISCIPLINE - Demo CS**

I believe this is former members of BLOOD PRESURE and doesn't stray too far from that path. Raw, to the point, early '80s USHC influenced 'core. I could spend my life listening to stuff like this and never ever get bored—I mean, do you like *Flex Your Head?* *Boston Not LA?* Then you should party with this!

## **HOLOCAUSTS - Liberty LP**

Heavy crust, bass and drums only from Israel sung in Hebrew—its really intricate, musically and not just a blur of noise, speed and distortion, having a feel like something that would have been on Skuld in the late 90s. A really interesting release.

## **HONDARTZAKO HONDAKINAK - Zeru Hut-sa LP**

This is just fucking insane—manic, thrashing, and disquieting hardcore from the Basque country, though sonically it has the careening, teetering-on-the-edge-of-going-off-a-cliff feeling of classic Finnish hardcore. Have you heard the first DIE KREUZEN record? Imagine playing it at 10x the intended speed while occasionally bumping into the record player—that's a bit of what's going on here. Fantastic.



## **HOTET - Död Framtid EP**

Quick paced, garage punk from Göteborg, Sweden—there's a lot here that reminds me of MASSHY-STERI, so much so that I had to check I was playing the right record. Melodic, dual male/female vocalizations in Swedish that weave and overlay each other against a sound paying homage to late '70s Dangerhouse bands (X, ALLEY CATS, BAGS, etc) with an overtly pop edge. Can't wait to hear more.

## **IDIOTA CIVILZZATO - Civilia Idiota EP**

Their LP from 2018 was one of my favorites and this certainly doesn't disappoint! While the production level is a little dirtier it only helps add to their hectic take on the classic Italian hardcore sound—think early NEGAZIONE, think hasty, discordant, and frenzied noise arising from your speakers. One of the top live bands I saw this year, for sure.

## **IENTA - La Morte Chiama LP**

Truly excellent street punk from Italy—total heavy boot, big beat vibe going here. It reminds me so much of RIXE that I had to check I was listening to the correct band. Tough yet anthemic music that should make a whole room explode—outstanding stuff.

## **IMPOSTER - Crown of Horns CS**

Four tracks from these Brighton punx—think HERESY, think BOSTON STRANGLER, think RIPCORDER. Rapid-fire hardcore with boot-to-throat breakdowns—it's a follow-up to their 2017 demo and a great appetizer for their upcoming LP.

## **JACKAL - S/T EP**

Tough sounding, d-beat inflected, USHC—very Boston hardcore sounding and I don't mean garbage like TREE or SAM BLACK CHURCH. Hammer to nail attack, which alternates between blasts of fury to creepy crawling bits—just make sure you don't slam to mosh parts and mosh to slam parts.

## **JAD - Strach LP**

Burly, fast, yet fairly staccato hardcore punk from Poland—in a lot of ways this reminds of a less raw/primitive version of SIEKIERA (no, not the new wave stuff, the demo). Yes, I see most of you shrugging your shoulders—so how about this, almost industrial in its lockstep cadence, this roars across your cerebral cortex like a column of Russian armor across the frozen tundra.

## **JARADA - Ma'agal Sina'a 12"**

This just rips—slashing, snarling hardcore punk from Tel Aviv. This single-sided twelve-inch features eight tracks, sung in Hebrew, presenting an urgent critique of the modern Israeli state, both from a socio-political bent as well as taking an introspective glance into how the grander state of politics affects the individual. This is outstanding.

## **KOHTI TUHOA - Ihmisen Kasvot LP**

I think what has always appealed to me about Finnish hardcore is the overarching feeling of unease it projects in your eardrums—ripping across your cerebral cortex like a rickety out of control rollercoaster. Guitars and drums blast at an out of control pace while vocalizations in Finnish twitch and splatter to

create this wonderful tension. KOHTI TUHOA continue this tradition perfectly on this, their third album. Modern and familiar at the same time, they are a band which certainly deserves your attention.

## **LAXITY - S/T EP**

Chaotic, spastic punk from Poland that sounds a bit like if ANTIOCH ARROW got into a car crash with IN/HUMANITY and Dr. Frankenstein, put them back together, but mixed up the parts. Too random a reference? Ok, how about this—it's like watching someone throw a temper tantrum, with interludes of someone else ineptly playing the soundtrack to *Nosferatu* on a keyboard, and rather than walking away you are mesmerized and find it completely enjoyable.

## **LEATHER LICKERS - S/T EP**

Australian punx taking a manic thrashing ride through a wonderland of punk that hints at LIP CREAM, early NINE SHOCKS TERROR and *Pick Your King*-era POISON IDEA. Simple, to the point, relentless hardcore with solid hooks—this is one of those bands I could see being a perfect, chaos filled, good time.

## **LETHAL DOSE - Demo CS**

Less a demo and more a two-song tape to promote their upcoming LP, Dallas' LETHAL DOSE play a thudding street punk style that brings to mind the 4SKINS run through an American filter—if you are a fan of Pittsburgh's NO TIME (I am) you might want to hunt this down.

## **LIFE SUPPORT - Die Like a Man 12"**

Tense, ferocious, and burly hardcore with all the levels pushed to red—just swimming in a sea of distortion and violence. Explosions of speed collapsing into thick-necked breakdowns and then off to the races again. Modern hardcore as it should be.

## **LIPID - Nuclear Masturbation CS**

When I was a teenage punk rocker my friend had a leather jacket painted with an image of Reagan and Gorbachev with missile cocks pointed at each other with "Make Me Cum" painted above and "Not if, but When?" painted below them. Listening to LIPID makes me think of this jacket—hell I think of bands like LIPID every time I sit through another "hardcore" band who sounds like they spent more time listening to SLAYER and doing reps at the gym than blasting CIRCLE JERKS and getting beat up for being a weirdo. Look, this shit is fucking great—total outsider hardcore for freaks by freaks—its got hooks, its sarcastic, angry yet funny and queer as fuck. I mean can you go wrong with a band that posits the solution to all the world's ills is "free drugs and fucking in the street?"

## **LIQUIDS - 2 Soft Serves and a Hard Rock CS**

Brilliant, sloppy, lo-fi pop punk that is decidedly punk—think early Lookout records, think SWEET BABY, think a non-annoying CRIMPSHINE. Having attended many sweaty drunken East Bay house parties, I think I'm qualified to say this would be an excellent soundtrack to David Hayes breaking some scissors as the cops arrive to shut it all down before AGAINST ME can play someone's kitchen. If

I still made mix tapes for people, one of these songs would be on it.

## **LÖCKHEED - Demo CS**

Mid-paced, dis-motor-charge style hardcore from Northern California—lyrics about how war is bad snarled over a driving, pounding attack. Think those early WOLFPACK records or ULTRARAT—a great first effort and can't wait to hear more.

## **LOOSE NUKES - Behind the Screen EP**

Their demo from earlier in the year was one of my favorites and this EP certainly delivers on that promise—relentless all go, no slow hardcore with genius-level riffing packed into eight tracks of perfectly snotty hardcore. You know how utterly perfect and relentless *Pick Your King* is? This has that same sorta feeling—just a non-stop twisting, turning hardcore hayride. Absolutely flawless.

## **LOSS - Tape 2019 CS**

Crude and raw Swedish hardcore. There is so much reverb on this and the recording is so thin that it sounds like they recorded it inside a water tower, then cranked the mids and shot the bass player. Vocals are of the wailing-while-sorta-falling-down-a-well variety—trailing off into the primordial woods surrounding some ancient Swedish castle. The Vikings had castles, right? Anyway, this is enjoyable for sure—but don't go into it expecting the stadium crust of VICTIMS or WOLFBRIGADE.

## **LUX - New Day EP**

To judge the book by the cover art, you'd think this was the new WIDESPREAD PANIC or DEAD & COMPANY jawns, but once the needle hits the groove you are granted a one-way ticket to gloriously inept UK82 punk rock. Hints to the finer works of VICE SQUAD, or some other long-lost outtake from the *Punk And Disorderly* comp.

## **MACE - Beef LP**

Quick-paced hardcore from Chicago that reminds me a bit of a less precise TØRSO—not because they both have women up front on the mic, but more because of their efforts to combine hoods-up, X'd-up style, youth crewy hardcore with elements of d-beat. As a fan of both styles, I'm down with this for sure—tough, energetic, and well executed.

## **MANGLED STATE - Stigma 12"**

Caustic short blasts of mangled, distorted hardcore from deep in the heart of Texas. Loose and raw recording style giving it a sense of urgency—you feel like they were in the room during the initial tracking of the songs and someone came in and killed them all, leaving only this document to record they even existed.

## **MASTERMIND - Bad Reaction EP**

Grooving but not groovy hardcore from the UK—it's got that feel of a lot of the tracks on the *New Breed* comp. Tough but not overtly macho in its feel, it cooks along with plenty of energy a la KILLING TIME or THE ICEMEN, or the likes of COMBUST.

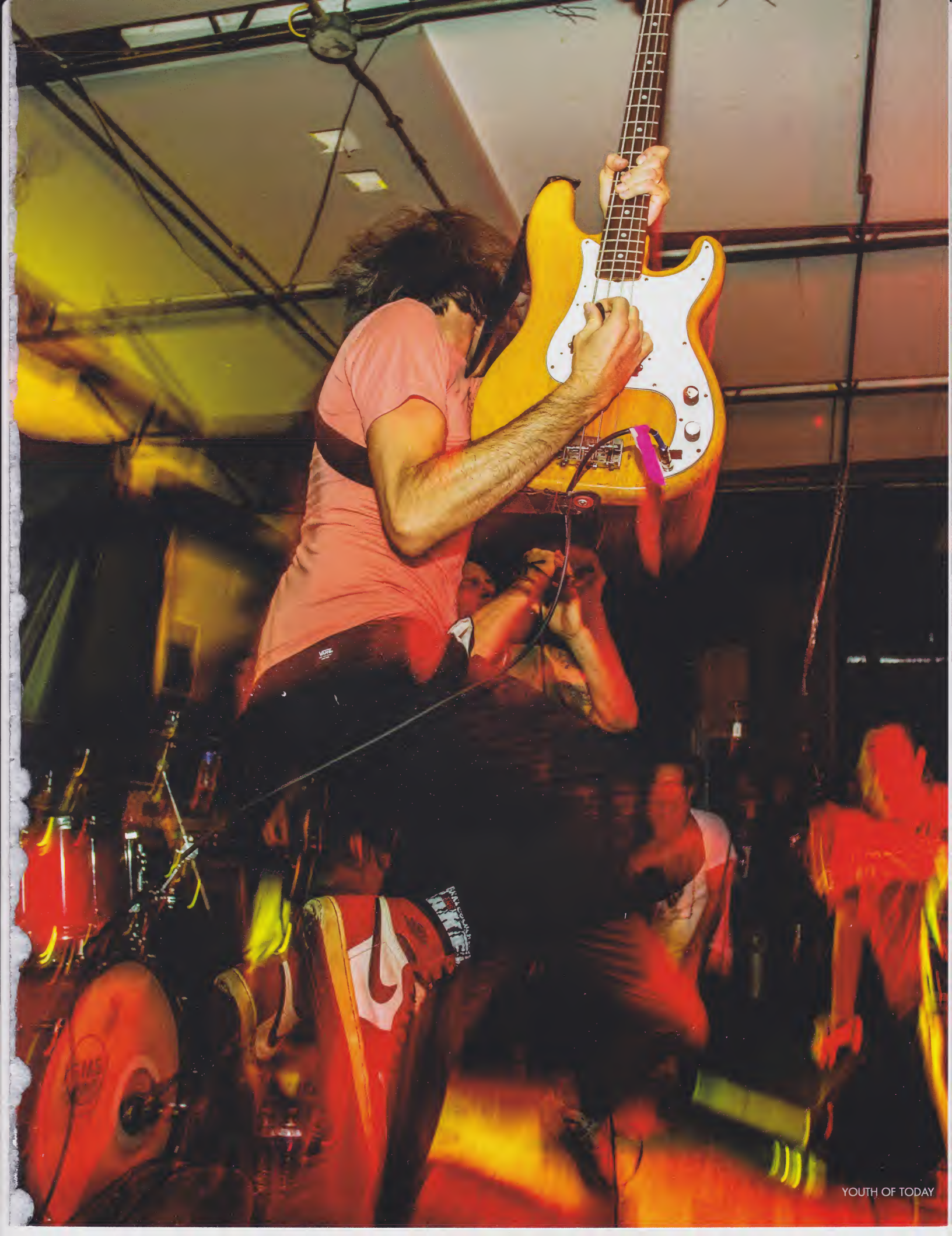
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with noise not music. You like GAI, ATROCIOUS MADNESS, and PHYSIQUE? Well, if you party with those, you'll party with this. This isn't a total wall of white noise, however - there are a few melodic hooks which come peeking through cascading sheets of white phosphorus coating your ears.

## MUSTANG - Mind Wandering LP

Total blitzkrieg attack of sweltering Japanese hardcore. "Burning Spirits" is a term which gets thrown around fairly loosely these days but if you are looking for a great example, this is it—sweeping, melodic guitars played with intricacy, complexity and at blazing speeds? This is what you got! A bit less of polished recording style than their late 90s releases, but not in a way that's distracting or taking away from their power. If you are keeping score, this has members of CRUDE and DEATH SIDE.

## NEEDLE - S/T CS

Brutal power-violence infected metallic grind from Washington DC—if you told me this was from Redwood City and featured members of DEADBODIESEVERYWHERE and AGENTS OF SATAN, I'd probably believe you. Tony Molina would probably jump out a trash can to school you on the lie you told, but you know, I'm from the Midwest, what do I know about Ben Davis and smoking mountains of weed? But I digress—faster than fast blast beats alternating with SLAYER-esque grooves, vocals sound like a monster fighting with a hamster. This is good.

## NEGATIV - Epicrisis EP

The first taste I had of NEGATIV was their brilliant LP from 2018, *Projections*, and I was hooked from the get-go. It was a miserable stew melding the finest elements of classic Norwegian hardcore like SISTA DAGERS HELVETE to the tension-inducing stomp of RUDIMENTARY PENI and wrapping it up in a package filled with an ominous sense of Lovecraftian dread. On this, their follow up EP, they continue in that tradition with twisting riffs and thrashing drums backing up snarling, howling vocals that cut through the cacophony with a sense mirthful misery.

## NERVOUS JERK - 1994 EP

Punchy, melodic punk from New Zealand—the title track is a gut-puncher of slashing guitars and vocals that strut along building to a crescendo of "I was born in a hospital wasted..." One of the finest examples of this style I've heard in some time—if they were born in 1964 they'd be playing with STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, if they were born in 1974 they'd be playing with DILLINGER FOUR, or in 1984 with ALLERGIC TO BULLSHIT—all signs point to a drunken good time. Pop punk with the emphasis on the P-U-N-K.

## NIGHTWATCHERS - La Paix Ou Le Sable LP

Absolutely brilliant melodic French punk that echoes heavily of bands like RADIOACTIVITY or THE OBSERVERS. Slashing, jangly, and pleasant guitar lines driven by lockstep drumming which never allows this to flutter off into being pure pop. One of my favorite recent discoveries and I hope to hear more soon!

## NITAD - Allt Är Upp Och Ner EP

Oh NITAD—how do I love thee? Primitive hardcore punk from Sweden that leans more towards an early '80s snot-soaked California-by-way-of-early '00s-Copenhagen vibe than the lickers of skit or bomb raid victims, which Sweden is more known for. I know they've been quiet and allegedly broken up for a bit—does this mean they are back?

## NO SUGAR - Rock 'n' Roll Isn't Boring It's You LP

Raucous garage punk from Germany—a strutting, high-energy rock 'n' roll assault filled with sass and swagger. They have a song about pizza and sex, you can't lose with a song about pizza and sex. Really fun record.

## NOSEBLEED - Outside Looking In EP

Thick slabs of tough hardcore that cooks along taking cues as much from URBAN WASTE as *Droppin' Many Suckers*-era MADBALL—fast but with a bit of the ole Doc Marten Stomp. Gone is the tinge of d-beat hardcore swagger present on the first EP—a ferocious live band, this is a solid documentation of their journey through the hardcore jungle. Its gonna be cool to see where they go...



## NOSFERATU - Solution A LP

This is just ridiculous, in the best possible way. Hearing this is like the first time I heard the NEOS or CROSSED OUT—just out of control, faster than fast hardcore which just explodes in your face and rips out your eardrums, stomping them flat. A sloppy and totally insane ball of pure, unadulterated furious energy, relentless in its approach, producing totally over-the-top, discordant slabs of hardcore that just pummel you over and over with manic velocity, producing a festering sense of unease in the most delightful way. Just perfect.

## NUKKEHAMMER - A Distant Hissing In Your Ear EP

The first time I met the bassist of NUKKEHAMMER we spent the night blasting GRIM REAPER and COC records while talking about VOID, eventually leading to a glass coffee table being shattered as part of a proper demonstration of how to stage dive to the BEYOND demo. The next morning featured random nudity, mysterious bloodstains, and mountainous platters of Szechuan Tofu. Somehow, for me, this sums up the chaotic, treble-to-the-max, distortion-soaked mayhem that is NUKKEHAMMER. For you, it might be more like SEPTIC DEATH and ANTICIMEX hanging at Mike Dean from COC's house doing monstrous bong hits while listening to HAWKWIND. This is great.

## OBLAKA - Insight Flexi

OBLAKA hail from the remote Siberian town of Yakutsk—it is the coldest city on Earth. I'm talking -51F in the winter, that is insane!! Out of the grim permafrost rises the brutish, pummeling hardcore of OBLAKA—delivering a simple, raw gut punch of fervent brutality. Animalistic vocals layered over an austere, primal assault of drums and guitars. Really cool.

## OHJUS - Ohjuskaaos EP

Blazingly fast thrash from Finland—this cooks along at 400mph, with desperate vocals shouted over a cacophony of jackhammer drums and sloppy thrashing guitars. It's really the lo-fi garagey production that helps make this great for me—think HENRY FIATS OPEN SORE playing KAAOS covers. Triple thumbs up!

## OHYDA - Koszmar LP

Pulsating and almost industrial in its approach—there are hints of something akin to a less produced KILLING JOKE, fellow Polish punks PESD, and the lockstep mechanical approach of CRESS. If you told me this was some recently discovered demo from deep in the vaults of Polish punk history, like the missing tracks from the *Jak Punk to Punk* or *Fala* comps, I would totally believe you. Classic in its approach to what could be deemed the classic Polish hardcore sound, this would snuggle in nicely with ABADDON, DEZERTER or WARSAWA releases of old.

## OJOS ROJOS - S/T EP

Three blasts of thrashy hardcore from Mexico. Intricate in its execution, each song slowly builds into a steamroller of speed after a brief respite of calm. Lo-fi recording adds to the urgency. It's odd how more Mexican punk doesn't make it to the United States, I'd love to see that change—especially if this is an indicator of what else is bubbling down there.

## OUST - S/T CS

Six cuts of Danish hardcore—less JESUS & THE GOSPELFUCKERS style and bit more American a la demo era FROM ASHES RISE slung headlong into demo era WOLFBRIGADE. This is good but I think when the ideas are fully fleshed out it'll be great.

## OUT COLD - Living Is Killing Me LP

Like the RAMONES or MOTÖRHEAD, when you open up a new OUT COLD record, you know what you are getting. No bullshit, no experimentation, no drifting off into some sort free jazz exploration—just track after track of stripped down, throat punching, rhythmically precise American hardcore. Originally recorded prior to the untimely passing of founding guitarist Mark Sheehan in 2010, some of this material was released on 2013's *A Heated Display*. An outstanding final testament to a legendary band.

## PAYDAY - Second to None LP

Gonna go out on a limb here and say they are named after the CONFRONT

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EP and if you know that record you know what this sorta sounds like, muscular early '90s hardcore a la Clevo bands like the aforementioned CONFRONT, RINGWORM (*The Promise-era*), INTEGRITY, etc. They do breakout into bursts of thrashing speed now and then, but this is mostly mosh and bounce. Some of the faster tracks hint at demo-era COLD AS LIFE, which is certainly appealing... everything old is new again!

#### **PERRA VIDA - Eterno Retorno LP**

Driving melodic punk from Lima, Peru. Imagine, if you will, THE GITS, or even the first DISTILLERS LP, but in Spanish. Aggressive, yet dripping with melody. Breakdowns, not in the macho jazzercise sorta way, but more in the pogo-till-you-puke sorta way. A great follow up to their self-titled debut EP from last year.

#### **PERSISTENT AGGRESSOR - S/T LP**

What is it about Northeast Ohio that generates such brilliant degenerates? Is it the water? Is it the rust that permeates everything? Is it a steady diet of lead paint chips? Hailing from Akron (home of DEVO), PERSISTENT AGGRESSOR tear through fourteen tracks of burly metallic hardcore—equal parts NEGATIVE APPROACH and CELTIC FROST. There is something here that brings to mind *The Promise-era* RINGWORM, in that it still retains a level of hardcore punk aggression that tempers the metal flourishes. It's fast, it's heavy, it pummels—get into it.

#### **PHYSIQUE - The Rhythm of Brutality 10"**

I'm such a PHYSIQUE superfan—thick walls of distortion, played at an energetic clip, with an undeniable ferocity that just steamrollers you over? Why, sign me up! On *The Rhythm of Brutality*, we find our heroes alternating between blazing bursts of velocity, tempered with tracks of thudding, stomping, mayhem-inducing hardcore that gets the time machine in my brain to produce fantastical images of Donna Lee Parsons from Rat Cage demonstrating their style in the pit at the A7. Essential modern American hardcore.

#### **PLASMA - S/T EP**

More solid, no nonsense, heavy hardcore from Florida—I'm not sure what's in the water down there, but they keep cranking it out in the Sunshine State. A heavy vibe of '80s Midwestern USHC through a NWOBHC filter, a la ARMS RACE or THE FLEX.

#### **POISON IDEA - Pig's Last Stand 2xLP/DVD**

It's always hard for me to write about POISON IDEA—there is always so much I want to say but never the right words to say it. Too often, I fear the accolades and expressions of importance I want to layer on them come off as hyperbolic yet lacking in their ability to convey just how important they are—simply put, they are the best. Not just the best hardcore band or the best punk band but the best band. For me, they encompass everything I love about rock'n'roll—the aggression, the humor, a sense of honesty laid bare... even when they are a car crash (like the infamous Chaos in Tejas show) they are still perfect. There is just something about them, which manifests the best and worst in us all that I connect with more than any other band. Recorded in 1993 and shortly thereafter released as a CD only on Sub Pop, this captures them at one of their peaks—starting with the epic call to arms of "Plastic Bomb" it winds its way through their career and ending not with their own track, but with a remarkable cover of the WIPERS' "Up Front," stopping along the way to pay homage to GISM, THE RAMONES, and BAUHAUS. It's a reminder that POISON IDEA was a musical sponge, soaking up influences from all over, processing them and regurgitating them back out through a filter of exceptional musicianship and romantic self destruction. TKO knocked it out of the park on this one—including a DVD of a four camera shoot of the show, it's a perfect release.

#### **PRESSURE PACT - Scared Off the Streets LP**

Dutch hardcore that is more SSD, BOSTON STRANGLER, and HERESY than the blistering speed merchants I often associate with the country. This is tougher than nails, stomping, vicious hardcore that doesn't let up for a moment. I want more of this please.

#### **PROTOCOL - Bloodsport 12"**

Subtitled "A Celebration of Violence," Florida's PROTOCOL crank out five tracks of gnarly, ferocious hardcore that calls back to the beautifully brutal. Take, say, YDI crammed into a blender with the sonic qualities of CONFUSE—less the style and more the way it sounds, blown out and thunderous, with all levels maxed



beyond belief. There is just this near-perfect level of viciousness that permeates the recording. One of the best live bands I've seen in recent memory and certainly a band I hope to see great things from in the future.

#### PUNTER - Demo CS

Really cool four song release from these Australians—high energy rocknroll punk swagger and strut, not garage but P-U-N-K. It's a little sloppy but in all the best ways—they say they're taking influence from late 70s UK punk like MENACE or EDDIE & THE HOT RODS and running it through an 80s USHC filter, and I can certainly see that—for me I'm hearing a more aggro take on what MURDER CITY DEVILS were doing, less white belt hipster and more studs'n'spikes.

#### PYSCHIC VOID - Skeleton Paradise 10"

I loved LSD in high school—like I loved to drop acid and listen to mix tapes filled with YOUTH OF TODAY, HAWKWIND, JESUS & MARY CHAIN and THE PAGANS and slowly wait for the walls to melt. This sounds like that, sorta—garage punk with affection for psych and all things drugged out but punchier. I could see this band on tour with BRIANJONESTOWNMASSACRE & WOODEN SHJIPS and blowing them out of the water every night.

#### RADIOACTIVITY - Erased EP

Two tracks of flawless, melancholic punk rock from deep in the heart of Texas—this just oozes hooks and has this beautiful sense of misery which pervades the interplay of the vocals and guitars. On a recent cross-country trek, they provided the near perfect soundtrack for the twelve-hour journey from Santa Fe to Oklahoma City—the serenity of the open road and endless blacktop. By now you should be familiar with RADIOACTIVITY, as they've been doing this forever, but if not, this is as good a place to start as any. Who would have thought someone involved in the VOMIT PUNX could create something so wonderful and perfect?

#### RATA NEGRA - La Hija Del Sepulturero EP

I can't get enough of RATA NEGRA—simple tuneful punk with beautiful melodies. There's a lot here which reminds me of early '90s twee punx TIGER TRAP in the music, though it's a bit more assertive in the vocal attack. Outstanding stuff.

#### REGIONAL JUSTICE CENTER - Institution 12"

Somewhere else in this zine there is an interview with Ian from RJC that centers around notions of art, the creative process, perceptions of your art by the greater world and the like—RJC is an abrasive and emotional artistic response to the incarceration of his brother. Musically, transitioning between sloth-like sludge and high-speed blasts, it is akin to a lot of what the kids call power violence. You know, bands that sound like CROSSED OUT or IRON LUNG though this feels a bit more cerebral than the pure rage-filled id of the former and more straightforward and 'hardcore' than the latter's more obtuse impulses.

#### RESTRAINING POINT - This World is Too Much LP

A hardcore band that plays hardcore—weird, right? Then again, what else do you expect from a Western Mass band featuring former LAST IN LINE, A-TEAM & OUT COLD people? Fast and anthemic, a la SLAPSHOT slammed headlong into 7 SECONDS. More "mature" than their prior efforts with the increased emphasis on melody and occasional intricate guitar work. My first impression was that the production is almost a bit too clean and modern for the style, but after a couple of listens I got over that—not everyone has to sound like it was soaked in a bucket of water, dried out and run through a distortion pedal, I guess. Really great stuff—in front of the right crowd I bet they kill live.

#### RESULT OF CHOICE - Place of My Dreams EP

Straight forward, youth crew style hardcore—it goes fast, it goes into breakdowns, there are stage dives, there are high fives. Think early FASTBREAK.

#### THE RESULTS - 6 Tracks EP

Delightful indie-punk that has the feel of a band you'd see open for SUPERCHUNK in the mid-90s. Think early ARCHERS OF LOAF or KARATE or UNREST. Really well-crafted pop songs laden with hooks, and a vocal approach that is just above a whisper. I could see them popping up on Slumberland Records and going on the GIRLS reunion tour.

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## **ROCKY & THE SWEDEN - City Baby Attacked By Buds LP**

It continues to amaze me how bands in Japan don't break up—it has been nearly 20 years since the release of *God Save the Green* and, dare I say, rather than turning into some noodling, introspect clap-trap, these guys just crank up the velocity and sound as ferocious as ever. Sure, most of the songs are about smoking weed, but maybe that's the secret—I mean the drummer was/is in *BASTARD and SYSTEMATIC DEATH*, they're allow to chill out—by playing high speed intricate 'Burning Spirits' style hardcore dedicated to how they are "Mad About Mary." This totally blazes, and at times has the same feel of early *PAINTBOX* in its dedication to melody at high speed—especially the track "Weed Weed Weed." In my perfect world, all stoner rock would sound like this—rocking but ripping. What will it take to get them to come to the States?

## **SCAB EATER - Ultra Vires LP**

Think slabs of distortion-soaked hardcore that just runs over your face like a bulldozer—this is one of those records that if the production wasn't soaked in layers of noise I could see an army of dudes in Triple B hoodies running riot in the pit for, which once again begs the question: if we can walk together, why can't we rock together?

## **SCARECROW - Revenge EP**

Positively ripping stuff from the TOTALITÄR school of hardcore—eight tracks of ferocious and energetic fist pumping punk rock. This cooks along at a quick clip just barely slowing down to catch its breath and provide a hint of dynamics. Quality.

## **SCHOOL DRUGS - Modern Medicine LP**

Snotty, garagey Jersey Shore punk that borrows heavy from the 80s SoCal surf punk vibe—think *DI's Horse Bites*, *Dog Cries* but a bit more modern. Its loud, its fast, with a bit of taking the piss and vinegar coating it all. Really cool record.

## **SEDITION ACT - Demo CS**

Powerful and straightforward hardcore from Singapore from members of *SIAL*—this time taking a less manic fuzzed out approach and going for something that reminds me a bit of what *DEATHREAT* or *LIFES BLOOD* were doing—catchy yet burly hardcore that doesn't shift into metal or breakdown tedium. An excellent first taste—can't wait to hear more!

## **SENSUAL WORLD - Feeling Wild LP**

Richmond's *SENSUAL WORLD* debut LP is such a pleasantly dreary journey—a beautifully morose trip of chorus-soaked dream pop. At times hypnotic in its sensibility, it's like watching *SLOWDIVE* and the *WIPERS* make sweet love in the rain via an old 16mm projector. I'm struck by how much Julie's vocals match the same timbre of Mia from *THE GITS* at times—they convey such a level of overarching passion and want that it's stunning. Brilliant.

## **SEX DWARF - Sensou Hantai EP**

I mean, they're called *SEX DWARF* and claim to be noisy raw punk mangel—what else do you want? On the sixth listen, I think I've been able to distinguish five unique distortion pedal tones being

cranked out by the guitar player, from swirling drill bit, to blender through a chorus pedal, to just the classic swarm of angry bees sound. This is the sort of thing I like to send people at work when they ask what kinda music I'm into, as they typically assume it's like *WILCO* or maybe something more extreme like *AC/DC*. In contrast, it is exactly what you, dear reader, hope and dream it will sound like: thunderous drums, sludgy bass, and guitars that are a pure wall of dentist-drilling: your-molar infused distortion—almost the epitome of noise-not-music.

## **SHRINKWRAP KILLERS - Parents + FBI = Cahoots CS**

And still I'm left to ask, do you want new wave, or do you want the truth? Can't I just have both? Ten absolutely brilliant, synth heavy, new-wave infected songs which drip with a pop sensibility but are tinged with a darkwave edge. Conceived of and performed entirely by the sonic wizard known as Greg Wilkinson (hey, he's got a Grammy), but this sounds nothing like his other projects (*BRAINOL* or *DEATHGRAVE*). Absolutely superb stuff.

## **SIDE ACTION - Saykopatik Hula CS**

Five tracks of distorted as hell, raw, thrashy punk hardcore with shrill, snotty vocals. This feels like one of those bands that would be absolutely explosive in a tightly packed basement show.

## **SKIZOPHRENIA - Undead Melodies EP**

Snotty, nasally punk rock from Japan that just cooks along. Catchy and intricate, it sounds a bit like something I would expect Recess Records to release back in its earlier days—I could totally see them playing with *LIL BUNNIES* & *FYP* to a drunken chaotic house party somewhere outside of Sacramento circa 1999. Also, as I'm a sucker for well-done cartoon vampires and related monsters, this might be my favorite record artwork of the year.

## **SNIPER CULTURE - Combat Rock EP**

Distorted as hell, ultra lo-fi hardcore punk from the Windy City—while this sounds like it was recorded in a kitchen using an old boom box, that shouldn't dissuade you from partying with it at all. It's got riffs for days and projects a sense of intensity thanks to its primitive production. Don't sleep on this.

## **SNUFFED - SkinCrawler/Rats of Sympathy CS**

Two tracks of stomping, snarling, 100% aggro hardcore punk from the Windy City that just rips at a quick clip. With each track clocking in at around 1:30 this is the sorta band you encounter on tour and after watching them play are like "THANK GOD ITS NOT ANOTHER SHIT BAND." I could see lovers of *TÖRSØ* becoming lovers of this.

## **SQUELETTE - Squelette EP**

What is it about the French that makes them so adept at cranking out catchy, distinct, and rather suave sounding skinhead bands? In contrast to the more thudding mid-tempo approach common with some of the US and UK bands (outside the classics of course), the bands coming out of France seem to have a knack for catchy melodies and playing at precisely the right tempo to create engaging street punk. Featuring members of *RIXE* and *LION'S LAW*,

*SQUELETTE* give us four rather brilliant sounding anthems, rivaling forefathers such as *CAMERA SILENS* or *WARRIOR KIDS*. I'll take another helping of this any day of the week.

## **SUBLIMINAL EXCESS - Demo CS**

Cool debut from these Chicago punk rockers—its dark and moody punk with a cool, loose swagger to it. Like early *TSOL*, it's still hardcore but there's a little something more eerie going on.

## **THE ROYAL HOUNDS NYC - God Bless The Royal Hounds LP**

How brilliant is this? Featuring members of *CRIMINAL* and *THE BRASS* this is a wonderful melodic street punk masterwork—marrying elements of pub rock, new wave-era *BLITZ*, glam-era *SLADE*, and cranking it through some sort of magic machine which churns out memorable and catchy tough-guy bubblegum rock 'n' roll. Yes, it's all that and no, I can't get these songs out of my head and yes, it's a little cheesy but no, I'm not going to stop playing this over and over. I'm such a sucker for this stuff... I can't wait until they come to Richmond...

## **THE TEMPLARS -1118 - 1312 12"**

Has it really been 21 years since this first saw the light of day?! I don't feel like I'm being hyperbolic when I say there isn't a better or more adored skinhead rock'n'roll band than these legends from New York City (you know, where the kids run streets). Perfectly crafted pop songs in an endearingly gruff, bravado glazed package. They've always displayed their 80s French Oi & 60s garage influences proudly and of all their releases this shows it the most—jangly guitars, fuzzed out leads, snapping drumming, cover of the French epic poem "Chanson de Geste" etc. This sounds like it was remastered as I recall the original version being a bit muddier.

## **TOMAR CONTROL - Nunca Mas Callar LP**

Adrenaline soaked hardcore from Peru with a definite youth crew, stage-dives-and-high-fives, sing-a-long vibe—think *7 SECONDS*, *BETTER THAN A THOUSAND*, *THE FIRST STEP*, etc. Lyrics address feminism, having a positive mental attitude, and animal/human liberation—this is a great follow up to their 2016 split with Boston's *SPIRITS* and their own EP from 2018.

## **TRAMPA - Muerte Es La Paz EP**

More great hardcore punk from Bogotá—snarling vocals and fuzzy guitars overlaying straight forward pogo-til you puke inducing drums. It might be a little simple in its execution but its certainly effective. No fuss, no muss just great hardcore punk.

## **TUNING - Hanging Thread LP**

Sweeping and driving melodic hardcore from the SF Bay Area—though this sounds a more like the stuff coming out the Midwest in the mid to late '90s, or DC to some extent. Think later *GOVERNMENT ISSUE* mixed with *BY THE GRACE OF GOD*. There is a cool sense of urgency to these tracks.

## **UZI - Cadena De Odio LP**

Ripping tupa-tupa punk rock from Colombia—melodic without losing a sense of aggression. Heavy UK82



vibe through a South American punk filter—think ULTRA VIOLENT, think UPROAR. It's quite amazing how much good stuff is coming out of Bogotá these days.

#### **VANTAGE POINT - An Answer You Won't Find EP**

More of that good time Boston straight-edge hardcore—four tracks of urgent and passionate hardcore in the tradition of TURNING POINT, CARRY ON, BANE and their ilk. The lyrics are about putting another log on the fire, dusting knick-knacks about the house, and looking for the way out of somewhere—the mall maybe? Jokes about the slightly boilerplate lyrics aside, I grew up on this kind of thing, and it is really well executed—they're probably outstanding live.

#### **VICTIMAS - Victimias CS**

This is great! Explodes with a scream of "VICTIMAS!!!" and proceeds to tear into high energy, d-beat hardcore that probably owes more to Spain's RIP than DISCHARGE—there's a good sense of melody present here, not relying on being totally distorted to deafness to get the point across. I could listen to this daily.

#### **VICTIMS - The Horse and Sparrow Theory LP**

A bulldozer attack of crushing Swedish stadium crust—the unity of sweet, sweet d-beat, MOTO-RHEAD-style drive, an emphasis on anthemic melodies, and just utterly monstrous production values. Lyrics that take a dour outlook towards class division, the devastating effects of industrialization, climate change, and the repercussions of the world's self-absorbed in the pursuit of greed and the accompanying corruption. Another great addition to their legacy.

#### **VIDEO FILTH - Hypnosis EP**

Tough, thick hardcore from Boston that draws inspiration more from the likes of OLHO SECO and BATTALION OF SAINTS (that makes sense, right?) than their fellow Bostonians. Guttural vocals, meaty guitars and drums that pound along in a sort of mid-tempo strut—the exception being the scorching track "System Violation."

#### **WARCHILD - No Victory in Death EP**

More songs about nuclear war, humanity and suffering—I mean what else do you expect given the band name and EP title, right? Swedish hardcore—in that its like pickled herring but music, get it? GET IT?! Thankfully, this is properly done, concise, to the point and absolutely delicious—unlike the sort you get at the smørrebrød shop in Copenhagen, save it for your trip to Sweden. Its fast, it's pissed, its done in the classic style—I love this band.

#### **WARHEAD - Change The Reality/Release Yourself 45**

The latest offering from the Kyoto legends, continuing on the path they set forth on their 1991 EP, *The Cry of Truth*. For the unfamiliar, they play a riff-heavy and anger-soaked take on the more classic Japanese hardcore form—it rocks, but avoids any sort of rock clichés with intense and insane vocals, courtesy of the legendary Jun. A bit rawer production values

than I feel like they've had in the past, but not distracting.

#### **WHISPERING MAN - Whispering Man CS**

Musically, this alternates between raw blasts of noisy, chaotic hardcore, and stomping, more mid-paced breakdowns. The vocals are just an enunciated wail, which to this old brain sounds like old French screamo ala FINGERPRINT, but younger folk might think misc. black metal band. I can see them blowing up a basement.

#### **WOLF WHISTLE - Private Hell LP**

At first, I thought I was playing this on the wrong speed, but then remembered that I was listening to it online... so yeah, there's that. The label references the MELVINS and I can see this, because it has moments where it picks up the pace a bit and rocks a little. But really, I'm getting more what in olden days people referred to as anti-hardcore, bands like NO TREND and FLIPPER, or, for a more modern take, CLOCKCLEANER and PISSSED JEANS. Slow, abrasive music designed to annoy and provide an evening of quiet discomfort built around heavy, heavy riffs.

#### **WOLFBRIGADE - The Enemy Reality LP**

I love WOLFBRIGADE. Seeing them in Stockholm was one of my highlights for 2018—they were impossibly good. Just this massive juggernaut that took over the whole room and filled it with the most beautiful, skull-crushing modern take on the classic Swedish hardcore sound—stretching out ANTICIMEX's riffs to let them breath, while mixing a bit of AT THE GATES' sensibilities toward being melodic yet heavy, and DISFEAR's rock 'n' roll vibe, to create their own massive take on crust, d-beat, etc. This continues on in that tradition—is it as good as *Lycanthro Punk*, or even 2017's *Run With The Hunted*? When the bar is set that high its hard to hit it again, but it is a powerful and totally crushing album. Part of me wishes they would pick up the pace a little—it feels a little like being heavy has gotten in the way of just letting it rip like they do on *A D-Beat Odyssey*.

#### **THE WRAITH - Gloom Ballet LP**

When I was first getting into punk, goths and punks all hung out, at least they did in Toledo. Sure, it was probably because there weren't enough freaks so we had to, but still, the cross-pollination of the underground was always a good thing to me, and it's great to see it happening again. Here we find Los Angeles' THE WRAITH on their debut LP cranking out a stew of *Dance With Meera* TSOL, THE CHAMELEONS, early CULT—the production is a lot slicker than a lot of recent darkwave stuff passing through my ear drums, but not enough to remove a sense of intensity.

#### **YLEISET SYTT - S/T EP**

On the one hand, you could say this is a Finnish hardcore band playing what could be construed as traditional Finnish hardcore but, what does that even mean? What if I was like, it's people from FORSEEN, KOHTI TUHOA and SICK URGE playing exceptionally catchy, driving hardcore punk, that draws inspiration from early '80s US and UK hardcore punk to produce something that translates into something not far removed from Finnish bands like LAMA or APPENDIX? Is that better? Never quite

going full thrash, this pogos and bobs along at a rocking pace, with plenty of killer riffs and sick drumming—it's interesting, a lot of US bands that ape this sound tend to have shit production on purpose, but thanks to how bright and polished this sounds, it comes across even more powerful. One of the most outstanding releases of the year for me.

#### **ZIMA - Demo CS**

This band has played a handful of shows around Richmond, but I've somehow managed to miss them all—listening to this demo, I need to remedy this error ASAP. Fuzzed out, clomping hardcore that reminds me a bit of Cleveland heroes CIDER—not too fast, definitely not slow, just straight forward, no frills, meat and potatoes hardcore punk.

#### **ZORN - Hardcore Zorn CS**

Black metal punk? Spooky punk? Metallic Goth? Everyone loves a label, but that shit is lazy—is it moody? Does it sound like the first MOTLEY CRUE at times? Does it sound like GISM at times? Do the guitars noodle away in this eerie harmonious manner throughout the whole tape? Does the vocalist wail like the queen of the banshees, Aibell, in the throes of ecstasy, while enveloped in the embrace of Dubhlainn Ua Artigan? Do they have a coffin the singer arises from at every show, even if it is in a kitchen smaller than the length of the coffin? The answer to all of this is yes. They hate it when people reference them to fellow Philly freaks DEVIL MASTER, so I'm not gonna do that, but if you prefer David Vanian to Captain Sensible... well you know what to do.

#### **ZYANOSE / ENZYME - Permanent Damage EP**

Two titans of absolute eardrum shattering, face melting, blown-out, distort-o-rama hardcore colliding for one devastating release. For their side, Japan's ZYANOSE deliver three blitzkrieging blasts of fuzzed-out-to-the-max crasher crust—taking the '80s UK crust sound of SORE THROAT or ELECTRO HIPPIES to its logical extreme conclusion. I imagine this is what the Ukuk-hai in *The Lord of the Rings* listen to at the gym—just a heavy onslaught of devastating ferocity. On the flip side, Melbourne's hardcore maniacs ENZYME crank out two discharges of pogo-till-you-puke, distortion-till-deafness punk rock with a slight psychedelic twinge—always with a tinge towards tunefulness. This is so sick.

#### **ZYFILIS - EP One EP**

Seven blasts of skull-cleaving käng punk attack! Powerful Swedish d-beat hardcore with really intricate bass work—if you are familiar with '90s Portland rippers DETESTATION, this is along that line of thought—it punches along at a more mid-tempo clip, but still is really enticing. These tracks originally appeared on a split tape with MURO.



# ENDORPHINS LOST

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